
MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE AND ADMINISTRATION
OF
SIR ROBERT WALPOLE,
EARL OF ORFORD.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

419. f



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M^{rs} Bovi. sculp^t

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE,
Earl of Orford.

*From an Original Painting in Enamel by "Jack"
In the Possession of the Hon^{ble}. W^m. Walpole.*

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M E M O I R S

OF THE

LIFE AND ADMINISTRATION

OF

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE,
EARL OF ORFORD.

WITH ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE AND AUTHENTIC PAPERS,

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE FIRST,

CONTAINING THE MEMOIRS.

By WILLIAM COXE, M.A. F.R.S. F.A.S.

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"OMNIA PRIUS EXPERIRI VERBIS QUAM ARMIS SAPIENTEM
DECET."

TERENCE.

"THE BLOOD OF MAN SHOULD NEVER BE SHED BUT TO
REDEEM THE BLOOD OF MAN. IT IS WELL SHED FOR
OUR FAMILY, FOR OUR FRIENDS, FOR OUR GOD, FOR
OUR COUNTRY, FOR OUR KIND. THE REST IS VANI-
TY, THE REST IS CRIME."

BURKE.



TO THE
REV^d HUMPHREY SUMNER, D.D. PROVOST,
AND TO THE
FELLOWS AND SCHOLARS
OF
KING'S COLLEGE
IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,
THESE
MEMOIRS OF SIR ROBERT WALPOLE,

(ONCE A MEMBER OF THEIR SOCIETY)

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

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The Head of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE is to face the Title Page of this Volume.

The Genealogical Table is to face Page 2.

The Four Plates of the Fac Simile are to be placed after the Advertisement of the Second Volume.

E R R A T A.

- P. 14. l. 20. for *three years older*, read *a year younger*.
 21. l. 16. for *three*, read *two*.
 first line of the note, for *two*, read *one*.
 47. l. 28. dele *as*.
 63. l. 19. for *confidentially*, read *confidently*.
 82. l. 15. after *Dungannon*, add *and ducheys of Munster*.
 96. l. 15. dele *although*.
 103. l. 12. after *his*, insert *own*.
 164. l. 12. for *difficulties*, read *duties*.
 186. l. 23. after *grant*, add *of*.
 209. l. 2. for *another*, read *the*.
 256. l. 2. after *measures*, add *he*.
 264. l. 33. for *had*, read *as having*.
 311. l. 21. after *business*, add *he*.
 365. l. 3. from bottom, for *recorded*, read *has recorded*.
 — l. 2. from bottom, for *reflects*, read *reflect*.
 374. l. 3. from bottom, dele *act*.
 406. l. 23. for *found*, read *founding*.
 467. l. 33. for *himself*, read *the minister*.
 498. l. 15. for *seasonable*, read *reasonable*.
 525. l. 17. for *member*, read *members*.
 553. l. 2. from bottom, for *Germans*, read *German pages*.
 576. l. 31. for *there*, read *here*.
 577. l. 24. after *motion*, dele *as proposed by Pulteney*.
 607. l. 28. for *them*, read *it*.
 note, for *Thomas Townshend*, read *Stephen Poyntz*.
 623. l. 5. for *and*, read *or*.
 629. l. 5. for *and*, read *that*.

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P R E F A C E.

IT is unnecessary to offer an apology for submitting to the Public, the Memoirs of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE, which embrace a period so important in the annals of this country. It will be sufficient to explain the motives which induced me to undertake this Work ; to announce the plan ; to state the authorities from which the materials are derived ; and to acknowledge obligations.

Nine years have elapsed since I undertook to write *The Historical and Political State of Europe*; the plan of which was printed, and submitted to the public. In the prosecution of that work I obtained access to various collections of original papers, particularly those of the earls of *Hardwicke*, *Harrington*, and *Peterborough*, and of Sir *Benjamin Keene*. It was in such forwardness, that the histories of Spain, Portugal, Austria, the German constitution, Russia, and part of Prussia and Sweden, were already prepared for the press ; I had also sketched the histories of the Italian States, Holland, and France : several maps were finished. Finding it impossible to obtain in England sufficient information respecting foreign countries, I visited Germany in 1794, with a view to obtain an accurate knowledge of recent events.

On my return, I went to Wolterton, for the purpose of inspecting the papers of Horatio lord Walpole, father of the present lord Walpole, whose interesting correspondence, during his embassies in France

and Holland, were of the utmost importance to my undertaking. I employed several months in perusing and arranging these papers. In the course of this occupation, I traced motives of action unknown to historians, which placed in a new light the foreign and domestic transactions of the cabinet. I also derived, from the conversation of lord and lady Walpole, many facts and anecdotes which elucidated the events adverted to in the papers.

The progress of the French revolution, and the uncertain position of Europe compelled me, notwithstanding the expence, and loss of time and labour, to suspend my original design, and to defer the completion of *The historical and political state*, till the return of more quiet and favourable times.

With the sanction of lord Walpole, I proposed, therefore, to give to the public a selection of his father's papers. In the course of this undertaking, I met with several letters and papers of Sir Robert Walpole, which made me solicitous to obtain farther information concerning his character and administration.

On my arrival in London, I had frequent conversations with the late earl of Orford, who related many anecdotes of his father, which led to further inquiries. It now insensibly became a part of my plan, to blend in the narrative, as many particulars relating to Sir Robert Walpole as could be authenticated, and to insert, in the correspondence, as many of his letters as I could obtain.

This design was promoted by the kindness of lord Orford, who imparted to me all his father's papers which remained in his possession, and permitted me to use them at my discretion, without the smallest controul.

The connection and friendship which, for a long period, had subsisted between Sir Robert Walpole, and his brother-in-law Charles viscount Townshend, naturally suggested that the Townshend papers must afford considerable information.

The acquisition of these important documents, led to the discovery

very and communication of others, particularly in the *Hardwicke*, *Grantbam*, *Waldegrave*, and *Poyntz* collections.

With these sources of information, the work gradually expanded, and Sir Robert Walpole from being a secondary, became the principal object. I therefore interrupted the impression of Lord Walpole's correspondence, and postponed that publication. I determined to give to the world, the Memoirs of the Life and Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, drawn from these copious and original sources, and to illustrate, by interesting and authentic documents, the transactions of the busy and eventful period, in which that minister acted so conspicuous a part.

In pursuance of this extensive plan, I found myself under the necessity of discussing the interests of Great Britain and of Europe, of developing the intricacies of cabinets, of tracing motives of action, of delineating characters, and discriminating the views of discordant politics.

Anxious to avoid an error, too common with biographers, that of considering only one side of the question, I was no less solicitous to procure the papers of those who opposed, than of those who supported the measures of Sir Robert Walpole. With this view I applied for and obtained communications of the *Stanbope*, *Middleton*, *Melcombe*, and *Egremont* Papers. These I have printed without interpolation and without disguise, not omitting a single invective, but leaving the reader to judge between the partial eulogiums of Hervey, and the acrimonious reproaches of Bolingbroke.

The Plan of this work is to give an uninterrupted narrative of the life and administration of Sir Robert Walpole, illustrated by original correspondence and authentic papers.

The Memoirs, which are contained in the first volume, are divided into eight periods, comprehending a term of sixty-nine years, from his birth in 1676, to his death in 1745.

The

The Correspondence, which occupies the second and third volumes, is, for facility of reference, also divided into eight periods, applying to the subjects of the corresponding periods in the narrative.

The Authorities from which the materials are derived, may be divided into PRINTED, ORAL, and MANUSCRIPT information.

PRINTED INFORMATION.

Though this source of intelligence is open to every writer, and an omission to consult and compare the advocates on both sides of the question, indicates either negligence or want of candour, yet *Smollett* and *Bellsham*, in their accounts of the times, have betrayed these faults in the highest degree. Dazzled by the eloquence of *Pulteney*, seduced by the sophistry of *Bolingbroke*, or deluded by the speciousness of *Chesterfield*, they appear to have formed their opinions without comparison, to have stigmatized the whole administration of *Sir Robert Walpole*, as an uniform mass of corruption and depravity, as a gloomy period, during which not a single ray of light gleams through the impenetrable darkness. Though I have occasionally noticed the misrepresentations of these writers, yet, as *Smollett* quotes no authorities, and appears *never* to have consulted the Journals, and either partially or superficially to have perused the parliamentary debates; and as *Bellsham* is, in general, a mere copyist of *Smollett* as to facts, though he differs from him in speculations; I have not relied on either as an authority.

The history of England which I have principally consulted, is the continuation of *Rapin*, published under the name of *Tindal*, but principally written by *Dr. Birch*. His papers in the Museum, and in the *Hardwicke Collection*, which I have examined with scrupulous attention, and various other documents which were submitted to his inspection, and to which I have had access, prove great accuracy of research, judgment in selection, and fidelity in narration. He derived considerable assistance from persons of political eminence,
* particularly

particularly the late lord Walpole, the late earl of Hardwicke, and the honourable Charles Yorke *. Birch was a staunch Whig, but his political opinions have never led him to forget his duty as an historian. He has not garbled or falsified debates, or mistated facts; he has not wantonly traduced characters, or acrimoniously reviled individuals, because they espoused the cause which he disapproved; but in his whole work, whether he praises or blames, there is a manly integrity and candid temperance, which must recommend him to the discerning reader.

It naturally became a part of my task to consult all works which treat of the life and administration of Sir Robert Walpole; and it is remarkable, that except political pamphlets, which were confined to temporary and specific objects, my utmost research could only discover two publications.

The first is, "A critical History of the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, now Earl of Orford, collected chiefly from the Debates in Parliament, and the political Writings on both Sides, 1743." This anonymous work is contemptible both in matter and style. It is, with few exceptions, a mere compilation from the most virulent opposition pamphlets, but is useful as an index of the points which, at the time, drew most attention, and as containing an account of the most remarkable publications on both sides.

The second is "Histoire du Ministère du Chevalier *Walpool* devenu Ministre d'Angleterre, et Comte d'*Oxford*, Amsterdam, 1764, in three volumes." This work is principally compiled from the preceding publication, although the author affects greater impartiality, and frequently turns the most virulent censures into the most fulsome panegyric. The writer is so ignorant as to call him earl of *Oxford*, and so deficient in point of information, that the whole pe-

* The account of the partition treaty was written by the late earl of Hardwicke. The account of lord Somers's argument in Barker's case, was written by his great nephew, the late Mr. C. Yorke. I can also trace numerous communications by Horace Walpole, though they cannot be so easily specified.

riod, from the declaration of war against Spain in 1739, to the resignation of the minister in 1742, is contained in fourteen lines. From sources so partial and deficient, little information could be derived.

I have carefully consulted the political writings of the times, on both sides of the question. I have perused with the same attention the most violent invectives, and party statements against the minister, as well as those that were written in his favour, and from a scrupulous comparison of both have endeavoured to extract the truth.

These works are too numerous to recapitulate. To the political writings of Bolingbroke, Pulteney, and Chesterfield, I have paid peculiar attention, and scrutinized them with a close, and, I trust, an impartial inspection.

The "Craftsman," which commenced in 1727, was the great vehicle of opposition essays. This paper, as it always contained the strength of the arguments urged against the measures of government, detailed with great eloquence and wit, has been assiduously examined. The Political State of Great Britain, the Historical Register, and Annals of Europe, ample and not incorrect periodical publications, have contributed information with respect to domestic events, points of chronology, and debates in parliament.

I have derived collateral assistance from the Gentleman's and London Magazines, which were ably conducted.

I have occasionally collected the substance of debates from *Candler's* Parliamentary Proceedings, to the general accuracy of which, though recently called in question, several reasons have induced me to give credit.

1. They are taken from the contemporary papers, such as the Historical Register, and the Political State of Great Britain; the authors of which were frequently supplied with notes and memorandums by members of parliament. From the year 1735, when the debates were no longer published in the Political State, the speeches were given in the Gentleman's Magazine by Guthrie, and in the
London

London Magazine by Gordon, both of whom constantly attended in the gallery of the house, and received information from members of parliament.

2. There are among the Walpole and Orford papers minutes of Sir Robert Walpole's speeches, and occasional notes, taken by him in the house of commons, of those of other members. In comparing these minutes and notes with the speeches in Chandler, I generally find the leading expressions preserved in the debates; which proves the authenticity of those particular speeches, and furnishes a strong presumption in favour of the rest.

3. Several letters, which I have published in the Correspondence, contain brief accounts of the parliamentary proceedings, and in most instances accord with the printed debates.

4. Sir Robert Walpole told his son, the late earl of Orford, that his speeches were in general faithfully represented in the public prints.

5. Lord Bath assured the present bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Douglas, that most of his speeches were correctly given, yet better than he had delivered them.

From the 19th of November, 1740, many of the debates were *written* by Dr. Johnson, and published in the Gentleman's Magazine. Doubts have arisen concerning their authenticity. Some of Johnson's biographers have declared that they were partly composed by himself; another, Sir John Hawkins, that they were wholly fictitious; and Johnson himself is said to have confessed, that they were not authentic, and excepting their general import, were the work of his own imagination.

This account, however, is not perfectly consonant to fact. Either Johnson deceived himself into an exaggeration of his own powers, or his biographers mistook his assertion. The real truth is, that Johnson constantly received notes and heads of the speeches from

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persons employed by Cave, and particularly from Guthrie. The bishop of Salisbury recollects to have seen several of these notes, which Guthrie communicated to him on the very day on which he obtained them, which were regularly transmitted to Johnson, and formed the basis of his orations.

ORAL AND MANUSCRIPT INFORMATION.

WALPOLE PAPERS.

My first and warmest acknowledgments are due to lord Walpole, for the papers of his father Horatio, the first lord Walpole of Wolterton, brother of Sir Robert Walpole, and ambassador in France and Holland. This collection has afforded the most ample materials. It contains his original correspondence, both public and private, as well abroad as in England; many confidential letters which passed between him, the queen, and Sir Robert Walpole; various documents, memorials, and political dissertations, which afford the clearest insight into foreign affairs, and prove his active and indefatigable exertions.

A specific detail of this collection, which occupies no less than one hundred and forty folio volumes, must be referred to a future publication, in which I purpose to give a selection of the most interesting letters not inserted in this work.

I am also indebted to lord Walpole for many interesting anecdotes and explanations, which he had from his father.

ORFORD PAPERS.

The late earl of Orford, third son of Sir Robert Walpole, favoured me with access to all the papers of his father remaining in his possession.

Had

Had this collection been preserved entire, it would have been invaluable and unparalleled, both for extent and importance, but some have been destroyed, others dispersed, and many lost. When he retired from office, the minister destroyed a large quantity. Not long before his death he said to his son, "Horace, when I am gone, you will find many curious papers in the drawer of this table," and mentioned, among others, the memorial which had been drawn up by Bolingbroke, and presented by the duchess of Kendal to the king. When his son, some time after his death, inspected the drawer, the papers were lost, and were never afterwards recovered. In relating this anecdote, the late earl of Orford declared his opinion that the papers had been either inadvertently destroyed by his elder brother, or stolen by a steward. Several letters belonging to this collection were given to the late lord Walpole, and are preserved at Wolterton. Notwithstanding these defalcations, the collection still contains many documents of high importance, of which I have availed myself.

To lord Orford I am highly indebted for numerous facts and anecdotes relating to Sir Robert Walpole, which nobody but himself could have authenticated. In gratefully acknowledging these favours, I feel it my duty to pay a just tribute to his candour. He repeatedly said, "You will remember that I am the son of Sir Robert Walpole, and therefore must be prejudiced in his favour. Facts I will not misrepresent or disguise, but my opinions and reflections on those facts you will receive with caution, and adopt or reject at your discretion." Although he testified a natural solicitude to see the memoirs of his father, yet he not unfrequently expressed his wishes that the work might not appear while he was alive, lest it might be thought that from motives of delicacy, I had not delivered my sentiments with freedom.

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TOWNSHEND PAPERS.

I am obliged to the marquis Townshend for access to the papers of his grandfather Charles, the second viscount Townshend, who was plenipotentiary at Gertruydenberg and at the Hague, and principal secretary of state. Lord Townshend's masterly letters to George the First; the notes between George the Second and him; the confidential intercourse which he regularly maintained with his brother in law, Sir Robert Walpole, while he was at Hanover; have materially contributed to illustrate those transactions in which the brother ministers had a principal share.

HARDWICKE PAPERS.

To my noble friend the earl of Hardwicke, I gratefully acknowledge my obligations for the use of his collection. From it I have been supplied with various papers, memorandums, and narratives of his grandfather, the lord chancellor, and of the late earl of Hardwicke; letters from the duke of Newcastle; the confidential correspondence between Sir Robert Walpole and lord Townshend, and the papers of Sir Luke Schaub, together with other documents of importance.

SYDNEY PAPERS.

I am indebted to lord Sydney for the communication of letters which belonged to his father, the honourable Thomas Townshend, second son of Charles viscount Townshend, and the confidential friend of Sir Robert Walpole. The kindness of lord Sydney, and his brother, Charles Townshend, Esquire, has also supplied many anecdotes derived from the conversation of their father.

WALDEGRAVE PAPERS.

To the Countess of WALDEGRAVE, I am obliged for submitting to my inspection the dispatches of her grandfather James, first earl

earl of Waldegrave, during his embassies at Vienna and Paris, from 1727 to 1740. Among other points of secret history, they detail many interesting conversations with Cardinal Fleury, and with Chauvelin, keeper of the seals. They contain also various letters to and from Sir Robert Walpole, of the most private and confidential nature, which are printed in the Correspondence.

In addition to these, I have to enumerate other communications made in the most liberal and obliging manner, and to offer my grateful acknowledgments:

HARRINGTON PAPERS.

To the earl of Harrington, for the correspondence of his grandfather William Stanhope, first earl of Harrington, who was envoy and ambassador at Madrid, plenipotentiary at the congress of Soissons, and secretary of state. Also for some papers of Charles Stanhope, elder brother of the first earl of Harrington, who was private and confidential secretary to earl Stanhope, and secretary to the treasury under the earl of Sunderland. This collection supplied me with many interesting letters, which relate to the schism in the administration in 1716, and a confidential correspondence between Newcastle and Harrington, previous to the dismissal of lord Townshend.

GRANTHAM PAPERS.

To lady Grantham, for the papers of Sir Thomas Robinson, first lord Grantham, who was confidential secretary to lord Walpole, during his embassy in France, and envoy and plenipotentiary at Vienna. These documents comprise an interesting account of the negotiations and transactions between Great Britain and the house of Austria, during a period of eighteen years.

POYNTZ

POYNTZ PAPERS.

To Stephen Poyntz, Esquire, for various communications from the papers of his father Stephen Poyntz, Esquire, confidential secretary of lord Townshend, envoy to the court of Sweden, and one of the plenipotentiaries at the congress of Soissons.

KEENE PAPERS.

To Benjamin Keene, Esquire, for the papers of his uncle Sir Benjamin Keene, so long, and with such distinguished eminence, envoy and embassador at Madrid.

CAMPBELL PAPERS.

To Archibald Campbell, Esquire, for the papers of his grandfather, Archibald earl of Ilay, and duke of Argyle; in which I had the good fortune to find several original letters of Sir Robert Walpole.

DEVONSHIRE PAPERS.

To the late worthy and much regretted lord John Cavendish, for several interesting letters, in the possession of the duke of Devonshire, written by Sir Robert Walpole, the marquis of Hartington, and Sir Robert Wilmot, to William duke of Devonshire, lord lieutenant of Ireland, a short time previous to the resignation of Sir Robert Walpole.

ETOUGH PAPERS.

To John Plumptre, Esquire, for the papers of the Rev. Henry Etough, rector of Therfield, Hertfordshire. These papers form a valuable mass of intelligence. They contain sketches of the reigns of William, Anne, George the First and Second; numerous accounts of Sir Robert Walpole, which he obtained in conversation, either from the minister himself or Horace Walpole, the minutes of which,

which, in various instances, he noted down. They comprise much information derived from Mr. Scrope, secretary to the treasury, and other persons whose authorities he constantly cites; and a long and interesting correspondence with Horace Walpole. Etough was a man of great research and eager curiosity, replete with prejudice, but idolizing Sir Robert Walpole. In the examination of these ample documents, I have only adopted such parts as were in my judgment entitled to full credit.

The following are the principal articles in this collection, of which I have availed myself: "A Miscellany, being Minutes of several Conversations while Sir Robert Walpole, and when Lord Orford, on several Subjects, from 1734 to 1744, with some Particulars relating to his latest Transactions."—"Minutes of a Conversation with Sir Robert Walpole, on the Attempt of Lord Bolingbroke and the Duchess of Kendal, to obtain his Dismissal in 1727." Printed in the Correspondence.—"An imperfect Essay on the Character and Behaviour of the late Earl of Orford, addressed to the right honourable Horatio Walpole, Esquire."—"Minutes of two Conferences with Horatio Walpole at Putney, August 6th and 20th, 1752."—"Minutes of a Conversation with the right honourable Horace Walpole, Esquire, November 3, 1755."—"Observations on the Elections in 1734 and 41, relative to lord Orford."—"Minutes of a Conversation with Mr. Scrope, secretary to the Treasury, relating to the Arrangement of the new Ministry on the Accession of George the Second." Printed in the Correspondence.

WESTON PAPERS.

To the Rev. Charles Weston, prebendary of Durham, for communications from the papers of his father, Edward Weston, Esquire, under secretary of state; containing, among other interesting particulars, letters from Sir Robert Walpole and lord Townshend, on the arrival

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arrival of the duke of Ripperda in England, and a manly remonstrance of lord Townshend to the king, dissuading the journey to Hanover; which the reader will find in the Correspondence.

ONslow PAPERS.

To lord Onslow, for some very interesting remarks of speaker Onslow, on various parts of Sir Robert Walpole's conduct, with anecdotes of the principal leaders of opposition. Printed in the Correspondence.

ASTLE PAPERS.

To Thomas Astle, Esquire, keeper of the records at the Tower, for various communications from his private collection of manuscripts, particularly, correspondence of the earl of Clarendon, during his mission at Hanover, and letters from secretary St. John to Drummond; which are printed in the Correspondence.

STANHOPE PAPERS.

The schism in the Whig administration divided Walpole and Stanhope, and converted their long established friendship into bitter enmity. As the character of James, first earl of Stanhope, was severely arraigned by Townshend and Walpole, candour impelled me to apply to his representative, the present earl, for any documents in his possession, which might tend to vindicate his memory from those aspersions. This request was acceded to in the most liberal manner, and those papers have materially tended to elucidate the transactions of that period.

MIDLETON PAPERS.

I am indebted to lord Middleton for the papers of his grandfather, the chancellor of Ireland, which develop the history of Wood's patent,

patent, and comprise several letters from his brother Thomas Brodrick, chairman of the committee of secrecy in the South Sea inquiry, and of his son Saint John Brodrick; most of these are replete with the severest sarcasms and invectives against the minister.

EGREMONT PAPERS.

To the earl of Egremont, for the letters of lord Bolingbroke to his grandfather Sir William Wyndham, remarkable for that animation, elegance of style, plausibility of argument, and virulence of invective, which distinguish his writings. They contain the most severe animadversions on the conduct and principles of Sir Robert Walpole, and are filled with the most bitter reproaches against his measures: I have thought it my duty not to suppress a single paragraph which reflected on the administration of the minister.

PULTENEY PAPERS.

To Sir William Pulteney, for the papers of his wife's father Daniel Pulteney, who was commissioner of the board of trade, lord of the admiralty, who became the strenuous opponent of Sir Robert Walpole, and wrote against him with great severity in the "Craftsman."

MELCOMBE PAPERS.

To Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, Esquire, for the papers of George Dodington, Lord Melcombe, from which I have selected several private letters, animadverting, with much acrimony, on the conduct and system of Sir Robert Walpole, extolling the principles and directing the views of that opposition which drove him from the helm.

To Dr. Douglas, bishop of Salisbury, I am indebted for several interesting particulars, derived from daily conversations, during an intimate intercourse of many years with his friend and patron the earl of Bath. While I gratefully acknowledge my obligations to this learned and highly-respected prelate, for much valuable information during the progress of this work, I feel extraordinary gratification in reflecting that the Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole have derived assistance from the friend of his great opponent, William Pulteney.

Governor Pownall claims my grateful acknowledgments for the communication of a very ingenious and able essay on the conduct and principles of Sir Robert Walpole, which places the minister in a new point of view. It is inserted in the Correspondence.

With the assistance of these extensive sources of information, I have been enabled to elucidate many parts of secret history, either totally unknown, or wholly misrepresented, and to trace the motives of action which influenced the conduct of the minister, and directed the views of the British cabinet.

I have not been biased by the prejudices of party hatred or party affection. I have always considered the connections and principles of the persons from whom I derived political information, and after duly weighing all the circumstances, have equally avoided the extremes on either side.

It has naturally been my principal object to trace and discuss those events, which personally relate to Sir Robert Walpole, either in his public or private character, and in which he was either directly or eventually concerned. In the course of my inquiries, and in the perusal of the numerous documents to which I have had access, I obtained information of various collateral circumstances, and
of

of numerous characters, which though they did not immediately attach to the life of the minister, yet were connected with the transactions which he either influenced or directed. Hence I have been led to make occasional digressions, in order to elucidate interesting but obscure points of history. I have also introduced biographical memoirs of eminent persons, who were either the opposers or favourers of the minister, whose characters the papers and documents in my possession have enabled me to illustrate.

Fully aware of the uncertainty of tradition, I have been extremely cautious to confine myself to the narrowest limits. I have never once adopted the hearsay of a hearsay, and have paid no attention to any anecdotes or facts except from those who derived their information from persons of veracity, that were themselves engaged in the transactions of the times, and who authenticated their narratives.

I have, in general, quoted my authorities, and though in some instances I have omitted to enumerate them, that I might avoid the appearance of affectation, yet I can safely aver, that I have not advanced a single fact in the whole work, of the truth of which I have not been convinced by the most unexceptionable evidence.

In a few instances I have collected the substance of the minister's speeches from parliamentary minutes in his own hand writing. From these memorandums I have particularly drawn his speeches against the peerage bill, on proposing the excise scheme, in opposing Sir John Barnard's plan for the reduction of interest, and in reply to the motion made by Sandys to remove him.

I have scrupulously avoided all allusions to the transactions which are now passing before us, lest I might have been tempted to make my work the vehicle of panegyric or invective, and have fallen into an error not uncommon with speculative writers, who judge of remote facts by recent circumstances, and affectedly assimilate

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milate the events of past ages with the transactions of the present day.

I cannot close this Preface without paying a just tribute of gratitude to my ingenious friend Mr. Adolphus, for the advantages which I have derived from his literary assistance in preparing these Memoirs for the press.

March 10, 1798.

M E M O I R S
O F
SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

PERIOD THE FIRST:

From his Birth, to the Accession of GEORGE the First;
1676—1714.

CHAPTER THE FIRST: 1676—1701.

*Family. — Birth. — Talents. — Education. — Country Pursuits. — Marriage. —
Paternal Estate.*

THE ancestors of Sir Robert Walpole, who was the eighteenth male of his family, in a lineal descent, may be traced from the conquest. They took their surname, according to the custom of those days, from the town of Walpole, in Norfolk, on the borders of Lincolnshire, where they had their residence, until one of them exchanged the family seat for Houghton, in the same county *.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.
FAMILY.

Sir Edward Walpole, his grandfather, was elected member for the borough of Lynn Regis, in the convention parliament, assembled in April 1660, and voted for the restoration of Charles the Second. As a recompence for his zeal in the royal cause, he was created Knight of the Bath. He was remarkable for his eloquence and weight in parliament, and once, on a warm altercation in the house, he suggested an expedient which was immediately adopted by both

* Annexed Genealogical Table. Edmonson's Baronetage. Collins's Peerage; Article, Earl of Orford. Documents among the Orford Papers.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

parties, for which Waller the poet, in a high strain of panegyric, ironically proposed that he should be sent to the Tower, for not having sooner composed the dispute when he had it in his power *. He died in 1667.

Robert, the eldest son and heir of Sir Edward Walpole, sat in parliament for the borough of Castle Rising, in the county of Norfolk, from the first year of William and Mary, till his decease in November 1700. He was elected deputy lieutenant, and colonel of the militia, in the county of Norfolk, and took as active a share as his situation and circumstances permitted in forwarding the Revolution. He considerably improved his estate by his prudent management; educated a large family with much credit, and was held in great estimation by the Whig party, whose measures he appears to have uniformly supported. He had by his wife Mary, only daughter and heiress of Sir Jeffery Burwell, of Rougham, in Suffolk, nineteen children, of whom Robert, afterwards Sir Robert Walpole †, and Earl of Orford, the subject of these Memoirs, was the third son.

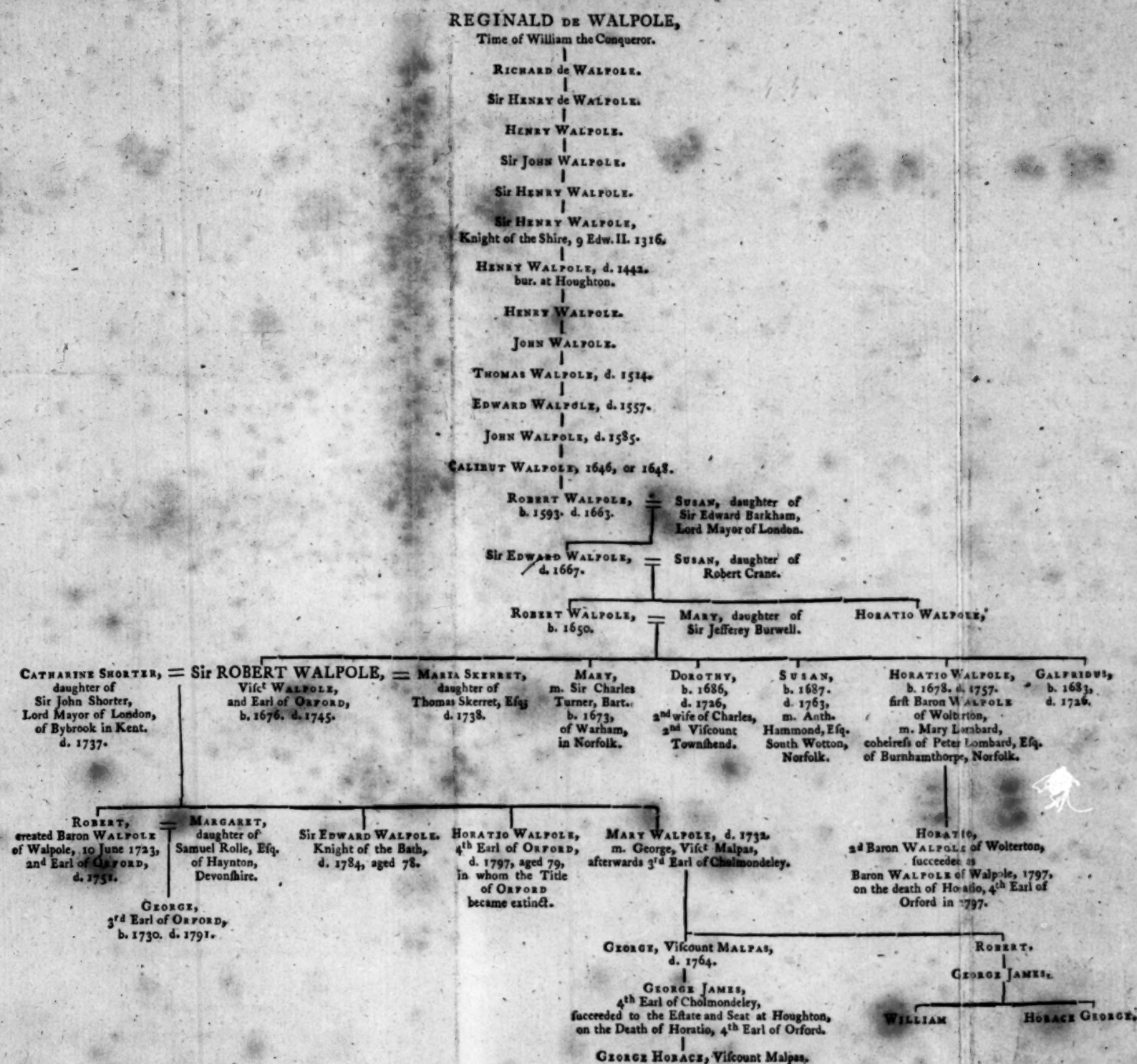
It seems to be an error not uncommon in mankind, to endeavour to exalt the merit of favourite and eminent characters, by false and exaggerated encomiums, and to attribute solely to nature, what is usually the combined effect of nature, education, and accident. The voice of friendship, admiration, or flattery, has declared, with a similar prejudice, that Sir Robert Walpole was born a minister. It was said of him, that he was endowed with a genius for calculation; and that the method which he adopted in settling accounts, was a mystery understood only by himself. Others of his admirers considered application in him as not necessary, because he knew every thing by intuition. But truth and impartiality reject such unqualified assertions, and the events of his early life will shew that the natural talents of Walpole, were rather solid than brilliant, and that his acquirements were the fruit of considerable industry.

He received an excellent education. He came early into parliament; spoke at first indifferently, until habit and practice rendered him an able debater. He was promoted to an office in the admiralty in the 28th year of his age; became secretary at war at thirty; was trained to business under Marlborough and Godolphin; and managed the house of commons during the Whig administration. Being deprived of his place, he distinguished himself in opposition; was persecuted by the Tories, and considered as a martyr by the Whigs. He promoted, with unabated zeal, the Protestant succession, and was rewarded for his services with the place of paymaster of the forces by

* *Ædes Walpolianæ.*

† The early traits in the life of Sir Robert Walpole, were principally communicated by his son Horace, the late earl of Orford.

A GENEALOGICAL TABLE of the WALPOLE FAMILY, with the Descendants of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE.



SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

3

the new sovereign, whom he had assisted in fixing upon the throne. Thus educated and inured to business, having thus served under government, and acted in opposition, he was placed at the head of the treasury. In this situation, adored by his family, beloved by his friends, and esteemed by his party, he was courted and idolized. His facility for transacting business, and his talents for calculation, were considered by his fond admirers as the gift of nature, when, in reality, they were the result of education, assiduity, and experience.

Chapter I.

1676 to 1701.

Robert Walpole was born at Houghton on the 26th of August 1676*. BIRTH.

* There is great confusion, and difference of opinion, with regard to the age of Sir Robert Walpole. He himself writes, in his letter to general Churchill, June 24th 1743; "No disgrace attends me since *Sixty-seven*." According therefore to this account he must have been born in 1675, and died aged 69, or in his 70th year. His son Horace, the late Earl of Orford, confirmed this account, and told me that, had he lived till the 26th of August 1745, he would have been 70.—The register at Houghton gives no account of his birth or time of baptism; but his death is thus recorded: A. D. 1745. The right honourable earl of Orford died March 18, and was buried the 25th, in the 68th year of his age.—At the bottom of the same page, in another hand, is, "The

great Sir Robert Walpole, earl of Orford, departed this life the 18th March 1745, aged "68 Years, and was interred the 25 D^r."—According to Collins's *Peerage*, and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, he was 71 at the time of his death, which would place his birth in 1674.—The register of his birth by his mother settles the dispute. The reverend Horace Hammond, rector of Great Massingham, in Norfolk, great nephew to Sir Robert Walpole, to whom I am obliged for the abovementioned extracts from the parish register, favoured me with an account of the births of all the children of Robert and Mary Walpole, registered in her own hand, in a book which is in his possession.

AGE OF MY CHILDREN.

Susan was born	-	-	-	6th June	-	-	-	1672.
Mary	—	-	-	8th June	-	-	-	1673.
Edward	—	-	-	23d June	-	-	-	1674.
Burwell	—	-	-	6th August	-	-	-	1675.
ROBERT	—	-	-	26th August	-	-	-	1676.
John	—	-	-	3d September	-	-	-	1677.
Horatio	—	-	-	8th December	-	-	-	1678.
Christopher	—	-	-	20th February	-	-	-	1679.
Elizabeth	—	-	-	24th March	-	-	-	1680.
Elizabeth	—	-	-	16th October	-	-	-	1682.
Galfridus	—	-	-	15th March	-	-	-	1683.
Anne	—	-	-	6th April	-	-	-	1685.
Dorothy	—	-	-	18th September	-	-	-	1686.
Susan	—	-	-	5th December	-	-	-	1687.
Mordaunt	—	-	-	13th December	-	-	-	1688.
A boy still-born	-	-	-	8th April	-	-	-	1690.
Charles	-	-	-	30th June	-	-	-	1691.
William	—	-	-	7th April	-	-	-	1693.
A daughter still-born	-	-	-	20th January	-	-	-	1694.

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Period I.
1676 to 1714.
1689.

EDUCATION.

He received the first rudiments of learning at a private seminary at Maffingham, in Norfolk, and completed his education on the foundation at Eton, under Mr. Newborough, who appears to have been distinguished for his knowledge, and to have raised the school to a high degree of eminence. Walpole was naturally indolent, and disliked application, but the emulation of a public seminary, the alternate menaces and praises of his master, the maxim repeatedly inculcated by his father, that he was a younger brother, and that his future fortune in life depended solely upon his own exertions, overcame the original inertness of his disposition. Before he quitted Eton, he had so considerably improved himself in classical literature, as to bear the character of an excellent scholar. A peculiar fondness for Horace*, marked his good sense, and even after his retirement from public life, when he had long discontinued his early studies, he was by no means deficient in the knowledge of the Greek language. His talents for oratory began to develop themselves at a very early period, for his school-master being informed that several of his former scholars who had been educated at Eton, and particularly St. John, had distinguished themselves for their eloquence in the house of commons, replied, "But I am impatient to hear that Robert Walpole has spoken, for I am convinced that he will be a good orator."

On the 22d of April 1696 †, he was admitted a scholar at King's ‡ College, in the university of Cambridge. During his residence, he was seized with the small-pox, which was of a most malignant sort; and he continued for some time in imminent danger. Doctor Brady, the famous historical advocate for the Tory principles of the English constitution, who was his physician, said to one of the fellows of King's College, warmly attached to the same party; "We must take care to save this young man, or we shall be accused of having purposely neglected him, because he is so violent a Whig." It was indeed principally owing to his kind and assiduous attention, that Walpole recovered. Notwithstanding Brady's political prejudices, he was so much pleased with the spirit and disposition of his young patient, that he observed, with an affectionate attachment, "His singular escape seems to me a sure indication that he is reserved for important purposes." In the latter period of his life, when the prediction had been fulfilled, this anecdote was frequently related by Walpole with a complacency, which shewed that it had made a

* He was accustomed to give his son, the late earl of Orford, subjects for his Latin compositions, and he almost always took them from Horace. Lord Orford used to recollect two themes which were applicable to his situation as first minister:

*Principibus placuisse viris non ultima laus est.
Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum.*

† Register of King's College.

‡ A collection being made, after he was prime minister, for the new building at King's College, he subscribed £. 500, and on receiving the thanks of the provost and fellows, he replied, "I deserve no thanks, I have only paid for my board."

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

5

deep impression on his mind, and proved his satisfaction at the recollection of an event that seemed to anticipate his subsequent elevation.

Chapter 1.
1676 to 1701.

At college he formed a strict intimacy with Hare and Bland, who were members of the same foundation, and in every situation of life, shewed an affectionate regard for the friends of his early youth. He raised Hare, who afterwards ably distinguished himself in defending the measures of the Whig administration, to the bishopric of Chichester, and promoted Bland to the provostship of Eton College, and deanery of Durham.

On the death of his elder surviving brother, in 1698, becoming heir to the paternal estate, he resigned his scholarship on the 25th of May. He had been originally designed for the church, and was frequently heard to say, with the confidence which characterises an aspiring mind, that if such a destination had taken place, instead of being prime minister, he should have been archbishop of Canterbury. Fortunately the superstructure of his education was made before the death of his elder brother, for after that event he relapsed into his natural indolence, and, the impulse of necessity being removed, no longer continued to prosecute his studies for the purpose of pursuing a liberal profession. His father also assisted in withdrawing him from literary occupations. He immediately took his son from the university, endeavoured to fix him in the country, and make him attend to the improvement of his estate: with that view he employed him once a week in superintending the sale of his cattle at the neighbouring towns, and seemed ambitious that his son should become the first grazier in the county. His father was of a jovial disposition, and often pushed to excess the pleasures of the table: the hospitable mansion of Houghton was much frequented by the neighbouring gentry, and the convivial temper of Walpole accorded with the scenes of rustic jollity. At these meetings the father occasionally supplied his glass with a double portion of wine, adding, "Come Robert, you shall drink twice, while I drink once; for I will not permit the son, in his sober senses, to be witness to the intoxication of his father." His mornings being thus engaged in the occupations of farming, or in the sports of the field; of which he was always extremely fond, and his evenings passed in festive society, he had no leisure for literary pursuits.

PATERNAL
ESTATE.

On the 30th of July 1700, he married, in Knightsbridge Chapel *, Catherine, daughter of Sir John Shorter, lord mayor of London, a woman of exquisite beauty and accomplished manners, and the amusements of London succeeded the more active employments of the country. Soon after

Nov. 28.
1700.

* Register of Knightsbridge Chapel, which the reverend D. Lysons, the learned author of the Environs of London, was so obliging as to search at my request.

the

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

the marriage his father died, and Walpole inherited the family estate, the rent-roll of which exceeded £. 2,000 a year*. It was charged with his mother's jointure, and with the fortunes of the younger children, which amounted to £. 9,000. His wife's dowry discharged this incumbrance, and his mother's jointure fell in by her death in 1711.

The death of his father threw him into the busy scenes of public life, when the violent spirit of party gave an impulse to his political exertions; and at the moment when the demise of Charles the Second, king of Spain, fixed the attention of Europe, and excited general apprehensions in England, left the united dominions of the whole Spanish monarchy should center in a prince of the house of Bourbon.

* Among the Orford Papers is a document in the hand-writing of his father, shewing the amount of the estate, of which the substance is submitted to the reader, as a proof that the reproaches cast upon him by his opponents, of being a needy adventurer, were unfounded.

June 9, 1700. A particular of my estate within the county of Norfolk, as it is now let.

	£.	s.	d.
Manor of Houghton	352	11	—
Manor of Birch Newton	80	—	—
Manor of Great Bircham	277	—	—
Manor of Bircham Toft	101	—	—
of Darlingham	453	11	4
of Sisleam	304	16	8
of Westwich	180	10	—
of Glostnops in Ledgett	100	—	—
of Harply	100	11	—
In Burrough, near Yarmouth	18	—	—
Small lands and tenements	50	—	—
Total in Norfolk	1,818	—	—
In Suffolk,			
Manor of Haffet	300	—	—
Farm of Cavendish, &c.	51	—	—
Total	2,169	—	—

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1700—1701.

Elected Member of Parliament.—Sketch of the important Transactions during the Two last Parliaments of King William.—Act of Settlement in favour of the Protestant Succession and Family.—Principles and Conduct of the Leaders at the Revolution.—Ineffectual Endeavour of William to extend the Act of Settlement in favour of the Hanover Line, virtually introduced by the Act for disabling Papists.—Artful Management of William to procure the Extension of that Act on the Death of the Duke of Gloucester.

ON the decease of his father, Walpole was elected member for Castle Rising, and sat for that borough in the two short parliaments, which were assembled in the two last years of the reign of king William.

Chapter 2.

1700 to 1701.

The death of Charles the Second, king of Spain, in the month of October 1700, the acceptance of his testament by Louis the Fourteenth, in breach of the second partition treaty, and the quiet accession of Philip duke of Anjou to the crown of Spain, acknowledged by England and the United Provinces, were events which had preceded the meeting of the parliament in which Walpole first sat. The act of settlement in favour of the electress Sophia; the violent conduct of the Tory house of commons in the impeachment of Somers and the Whig lords; the death of James the Second; the acknowledgment of his son as James the Third, by Louis the Fourteenth; the indignation of the English at that event; the successful manœuvres of William to rouse the spirit of the nation against France, and to obtain the concurrence of the Tories to a Continental war; the second grand alliance; the dissolution of the Tory parliament and ministry; the choice of a Whig administration and parliament; the declaration of war against France; the attainder of the pretended prince of Wales; the abjuration oath; the death of William, at the moment when he had infused an impulse into the grand combination; were the important events which agitated the public mind during the two last parliaments of his reign. To give a detail of these complicated and interesting transactions is not the province of a writer of memoirs, but must be left to the historian of the times; except so far as they may be supposed to influence the future conduct and policy of the minister, whose life I am attempting to delineate. With this view, it may not be improper

POLITICAL
EVENTS.

to

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

to state the circumstances which preceded and accompanied the passing of the act of settlement, and induced all parties, notwithstanding the avowed repugnance of a majority in the commons, to adopt that measure, which secured to the house of Hanover the throne of Great Britain, and had so strong and permanent an influence on the subsequent conduct of Walpole.

When the arbitrary conduct of James the Second against the constitution and religion had raised the indignation of England, and when our great deliverer William, the prince of Orange, had co-operated with the nation in driving that monarch from the throne; the leaders of the convention parliament, which established the revolution, acted with a spirit and wisdom well becoming the arduous situation of affairs, and with a temper which accommodated itself, as occasion required, to the customs and prejudices of the nation. While they set aside that absolute and indefeasible right, which it was averred no conduct, however tyrannical, could violate, and laid down the doctrine of resistance in cases of extreme necessity, they dreaded the evils of an elective monarchy, and guarded against the future establishment of a republican form of government. When they found it necessary to break the hereditary line of descent, they made the deviation as small as possible, no more than the exigency of circumstances required, and re-established it in the same manner as it existed before that breach was made. With these principles constantly in view, they declared that James, having endeavoured to subvert the constitution, had abdicated the government, and thereby rendered the throne vacant.

The throne being thus declared abdicated or vacant, by the absence of James the Second, and his son being supposed illegitimate, the next in order of succession was Mary, eldest daughter of James. But as the nation owed its deliverance from arbitrary power to William, the convention departed from the regular line by declaring him king, jointly with his wife Mary, and by vesting in him the sole administration of government. This appointment was a deviation from the system of hereditary descent, dictated by imperious necessity, and confirmed by gratitude; yet as Mary and Anne both consented to devolve their right to the crown on William, the convention may be said only to have confirmed this transfer. This single deviation excepted, the succession was continued after the death of William and Mary in the natural order: in the children of Mary; in Anne; in the children of Anne; and in the children of William, who being the son of Mary, eldest daughter of Charles the First, was, after Anne, the next in order of succession *.

* Blackstone's Commentaries, Vol. I. page 212.

In 1689, the first parliament which was summoned by William and Mary confirmed this act of settlement; but the king, ever anxious to promote the tranquillity of his subjects, and to prevent those future troubles which might arise, should all the persons named in that Act die without issue, thought it indispensibly necessary to extend it to the next heirs in the Protestant line. He ordered, therefore, bishop Burnet to propose in the house of lords, the addition of an amendment to the bill of rights, nominating Sophia, dutchess of Hanover, and her issue, next in the succession. Being carried by the lords without opposition, it was thrown out in the house of commons by the Republicans, high Tories, and Jacobites, who all united on this occasion against a bill which equally confounded their respective hopes, under the specious pretence that such a nomination was unjust, because it would preclude all those who were prior in lineal descent to the dutchess, even should they become Protestants*. The birth of the duke of Gloucester, having still farther removed the apprehensions of a popish successor, William did not chuse to press the nation in favour of the Hanover line, but was satisfied in obtaining his views by a more concealed but not less effectual method. Instead of naming Sophia, a clause was annexed to the bill of rights, disabling all Papists from succeeding to the crown, or such as should marry Papists. This clause first opened the prospect of succession to the house of Brunswick, without naming it; because that family, being the first among the Protestant descendants of James the First, became, from the perpetual exclusion of Catholics, next in expectancy to the persons named in the act of settlement. This remarkable clause passed, in both houses, without opposition or debate, notwithstanding the well known disinclination of the majority of the lower house; and the management of the whole affair reflects the highest honour on the judgment and temper of William.

Such was the order of succession when Walpole came into parliament; at which time the recent death of the duke of Gloucester alarmed the nation with the dread of a Popish successor, and enabled William to carry into execution his favourite measure of extending the act of settlement to the house of Hanover. Having been deceived by Louis the Fourteenth in the negotiations for the second partition treaty, he had dismissed the Whig ministers, who had rendered themselves obnoxious by signing it, and formed a Tory administration, at the head of which were Rochester, Godolphin, and Harley, who, from being a violent partisan of the Whigs, now sided with their opponents.

* Burnet, vol. 2. p. 15. Tindal, vol. 13. p. 144.

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1676 to 1714.

William well knew that the greater part of the Tories had consented with the utmost reluctance to the breach of hereditary descent at the revolution, and had almost uniformly opposed his endeavours in favour of Sophia, as tending, in their opinion, to overturn the system of hereditary monarchy, so long cherished by the constitution of England. He also well knew that the whole body of the real Whigs earnestly promoted the transfer of the crown to the succession in the Protestant line, but, at the same time, he was aware that among those who called themselves Whigs, were many Republicans, who would oppose it from a hope, that if the persons named in the act of settlement should die, means might be found to establish their favourite form of government. He had long perceived that the Whigs themselves could never have carried the bill which he had so much at heart, in opposition to the united force of the Tories, Jacobites, and Republicans; but he had now divided the Republicans from the Tories, by placing the latter in power, and being secure of the Whigs on this question, he thought it a favourable opportunity to make the extension of the act of settlement with the ministers the price of their elevation. He accordingly recommended, in his speech from the throne, February 1701, a further provision for the succession of the crown in the Protestant line; notwithstanding this acquiescence of the Tories, he could not carry his point without the consent of the princess Anne, who was at that time entirely governed by the dutches of Marlborough; and the dutches was highly incensed against William, for having formerly arrested the duke her husband, and still more for having publicly withdrawn his confidence from him. With a view therefore to counteract the influence of that artful favourite, and to gain the concurrence of Anne, he permitted insinuations to be thrown out, as if he intended to make a cession of his crown to the son of James the second. These artful rumours alarmed both the princess and her favourite, and extorted her consent to the act of settlement*.

But although the Tories had promised the king to promote the extension of the Act of Settlement, before they came into power, and had even permitted a recommendation of it to be introduced into the king's speech, yet the method in which they conducted the business, proved their wish to obstruct it. The speech was made on the 11th of February; the commons, in their address, took not the least notice of that part which related to the Protestant succession; and it was not until the 3d of March that the house resolved itself into a committee to take that subject into consideration.

* Cunningham, vol. 1. p. 185. Somerville's History of King William, p. 545.

Harley observed, that the haste in which the government was settled at the revolution, had prevented the nation from requiring such securities from the future sovereign, as would have prevented much mischief; and he hoped they would not fall into the same error; he therefore moved, that before the person should be named, a provision should be made by a committee for the security of the rights and liberties of the people. This proposal being accepted, the resolutions of the committee were laid before the house, on the 12th of March, specifying certain restrictions *, to be ratified by every future sovereign.

Chapter 2.
1700 to 1701.

Burnet, whose reflections on the Tories cannot be admitted without extreme caution, observes, that these limitations were designed to disgust the king, and to raise disputes between the two houses, by which the bill might be lost †; although some of these restrictions were just, and highly beneficial, this observation is fully justified by the subsequent proceedings of the commons. So many delays were still made, that the patience of the Whigs began to be exhausted, and one of their party was going to propose the electress Sophia. Harley could only prevent this measure by bringing on the question. With a view, however, to cast a ridicule on the act of settlement, he employed Sir John Bolles, who was disordered in his senses, to propose the bill ‡. The business was so contrived, that this man thus deranged in his intellects, was, by the forms of the house, appointed one of the committee who were instructed to prepare the bill, was twice placed in the chair, and twice gave in the report. The first reading was postponed to the

* 1. All things relating to the well governing of this kingdom which are properly cognizable in the privy council, by the laws and customs of this realm, shall be transacted there, and all resolutions taken thereupon shall be signed by such of the privy council as shall advise and consent to the same. 2. No person born out of the kingdoms of England, Scotland, or Ireland, or the dominions thereunto belonging, or who is not born of English parents beyond the seas, although naturalized or made a denizen, shall be capable to be of the privy council, or a member of either house of parliament, or to enjoy any office or place of trust. 3. No such person shall have any grant of lands, tenements, or hereditaments from the crown to himself, or to any others in trust for him. 4. In case the crown shall hereafter come to any person not being a native of the kingdom of England, this nation shall not be obliged to engage in any war for the defence of any dominions or territories not be-

longing to the crown of England, without the consent of parliament. 5. Whoever shall hereafter come to the possession of the crown, shall join in communion with the church of England. 6. No pardon under the great seal shall be pleadable to an impeachment in parliament. 7. No person who shall hereafter come to the possession of the crown, shall go out of the dominions of England, Scotland, or Ireland, without the consent of parliament. 8. No person who has an office or place of profit under the king, or receives a pension from the crown, shall be capable of serving as a member of the house of commons. Judge's commissions shall be made *quam diu se bene gesserint*; and their salaries ascertained and established: But, upon the address of both houses of parliament, it may be lawful to remove them.

Journals of the House of Commons.—Tindal.

† Vol. 2. p. 271.

‡ Burnet.—*Journals.*

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first of April, the second to the seventh, and it did not finally pass till the fourteenth of May. Thus the act of settlement, which was to secure the religion and constitution of the country, was received with so much coldness and contempt, that several members, during the sitting of the committee, indecently quitted the house, and so many delays were purposely made, that more than three months elapsed, from the day in which it was recommended from the throne to the time it was sent up to the lords. It passed that house after a slight opposition from the marquis of Normanby. Being carried back to the commons, it was received in a thin house, and several reproachful expressions were uttered against it by some of the members*.

After such a conduct, apparently calculated to render the bill odious and contemptible, what thanks can be given to the Tories, and to their idol Harley, for having in this manner brought forwards the act of settlement? Is it not evident that they had been drawn into a promise to support it by the artful management of William, and that they endeavoured to counteract the bill at the very moment when they appeared to promote it? The most zealous Whig, however, cannot presume to deny that the nation is highly indebted to the Tories for one of the limitations in the act of settlement, which the Whigs, with all their ardour for civil and religious liberty, would not have ventured to propose, because it was considered by the king as an insult on his conduct and administration. The restriction to which I allude is, that no foreigner, though naturalized, should be a member of the privy council, or of either house of parliament, or should enjoy any office or place of trust, or have any grant of lands from the crown. These necessary precautions, naturally suggested by the experience of those evils to which the nation had been already exposed, in consequence of raising a foreign prince to the throne, proved highly beneficial in preventing, on the accession of George the First, the admission of German-denizens into the councils and cabinet of England.

* Burnet.—Tindal.—Oldmixon.

CHAPTER THE THIRD:

1701—1702.

Walpole soon becomes an active Member of Parliament.—Is upon various Committees, and Teller on several important Questions.—Supports the Whigs.—Seconds the Motion for extending the Oath of Abjuration to ecclesiastical Persons.—Death and Character of King William.

ALTHOUGH neither the Journals of the House of Commons, nor any contemporary accounts, nor the traditions of his family, record that Walpole made any specific motion, or spoke in favour of the act of settlement, yet there is no doubt that he joined the Whigs in promoting it.

The Journals of the House of Commons prove, that he soon became a very active member. His name appears upon several committees, and in one for privileges and elections, so early as the 13th of February, only three days after the meeting of the parliament in which he first sat. He was particularly attentive to the business which related to the county of Norfolk; and zealously promoted the questions which concerned the trade of Norwich. He made the report from the committee on the bill for erecting hospitals and workhouses in the borough of Lynn, and for the better employing and maintaining the poor, and was ordered to carry it up to the house of lords.

He is also mentioned as teller on several important questions which related as well to the trade and revenues of England, as to questions of party. He was one of the tellers against the bill proposed by the Tories for the better preservation of the Protestant religion, and for preventing the translation of bishops from one see to another. His high veneration for the character of Lord Somers, and his zealous attachment to his party, naturally induced him to oppose the motion for his impeachment, and it is not improbable that he afterwards took a considerable part in his defence. Being young and unexperienced at the period when that question was moved, he gave only a silent vote, but he made a judicious remark, which proved his sagacity: it was, that the zeal of the warmest friends is oftentimes more hurtful to the person whose cause they espouse, than the bitterest accusations of the most inveterate opponents. The defence spoken by Somers in the house of commons was so able and perspicuous, and made so deep an impression, as induced Walpole to be of opinion, that if the question had been immediately put,

Chapter 3.
1701 to 1702.

1701.

April 23.

April 14.

the

Period I
1676 to 1714.

the prosecution would have been withdrawn. But the accusers of Lord Somers, foreseeing this event, made such inconsistent observations, and used such intemperate expressions, as provoked his friends to reply. According to the account of this debate, given by Walpole, Harcourt began with extremely fallacious, but as plausible remarks, as the subject could admit. Cowper's indignation moved him to reply, which occasioned the prolongation of the debate, at the end of which, what had been significantly and fully urged by Somers, was in a great measure forgotten. But had the impetuous zeal of his friends been restrained, and his enemies been permitted to proceed without interruption, as long as they thought fit, Walpole apprehended they would have not been able to divide the house *. He was one of the tellers in favour of the question, that the engrossed replication to the answer of Lord Somers to the articles of impeachment, should be read. On which motion, he divided with 90 against 140.

On entering into parliament, a due diffidence of his own powers repressed his zeal; and he formed a resolution not to speak until he had attained more experience, and some degree of parliamentary knowledge: but his prudence and caution were overcome by the more powerful passion of emulation.

During his continuance at Eton, he had been the rival of St. John, who was three years older than himself. The parts of St. John were more lively and brilliant; those of Walpole more steady and solid. Walpole was industrious and diligent, because his talents required application. St. John was negligent, because his quickness of apprehension rendered less labour necessary. When both came into public life, this emulation did not cease; and as they took different parties, opposition kindled their zeal. St. John soon distinguished himself in the house of commons, and became an eloquent debater; repeated encomiums bestowed on his rival, roused the ardour of Walpole, and induced him to commence speaker sooner than he at first intended. It does not, however, appear at what time, or on what occasion, he first spoke in the house of commons; all that is known on that subject is, that the first time he rose, he was confused and embarrassed, and did not seem to realize those expectations which his friends had fondly conceived. At the same time, another member made a studied speech, which was much admired. At the end of the debate, some persons casting ridicule on Walpole as an indifferent orator, and expressing their approbation on the maiden speech made by the other member, Arthur Mainwaring,

* The general account of this debate is accurately stated in Tindal's Continuation of Rapin, by the author, Dr. Birch, on the express authority of Sir Robert Walpole himself.

I have added other particulars from the authority of Etough. He derived his information from a conference which he had with Sir Robert Walpole October 31, 1734.

who was present, observed in reply, " You may applaud the one, and ridicule the other, as much as you please, but depend upon it, that the spruce gentleman who made the set speech will never improve, and that Walpole will in time become an excellent speaker *." The prediction of Mainwaring was soon verified. Walpole took a still more active part in the debates of the ensuing parliament, which met on the 30th of December 1701; which being composed of a majority of Whigs, and acting under a Whig administration, whom William had again called to the helm of government, was more congenial to his political opinions. Yet notwithstanding the preponderance of their interest, the Tories gained a victory in the choice of a speaker, of which lord Townshend takes notice in a letter to Walpole, who was detained at Houghton by the illness of his wife: " Mr. Harley has carried it from Sir Thomas Littleton, by a majority of four votes, which gives his party great encouragement, and is no small mortification to the Whigs. I am extremely sorry to hear my coffin has miscarried of a son, but I hope she is in no danger, and that we shall shortly have the happiness of seeing you here †." Walpole did not long delay taking his seat in the new parliament.

At this period, Louis the Fourteenth having, on the death of James the Second, acknowledged his son king of England, under the title of James the Third, William ordered his ambassador, the earl of Manchester, to quit France, and in a speech to the new parliament, told them, " He need not press them to lay seriously to heart, and to consider what further means might be used for securing the succession of the crown in the Protestant line, and extinguishing the hopes of all pretenders, and their open and secret abettors." Animated by this exhortation, the commons addressed the crown not to make peace with France, until reparation was made for the great indignity offered by the French king, in arming, and declaring the pretended prince of Wales king of England, Scotland and Ireland. The Whigs having now the power, abundantly testified their inclination to confirm the act of settlement by every means best calculated to favour the exclusion of the dethroned family. Accordingly, a bill for attainting the pretended prince of Wales, passed in both houses with little opposition. A bill also for the security of the king's person, for the succession of the crown in the Protestant line, and for extinguishing the hopes of the pretended prince of Wales, was carried with equal success. A clause in this bill, well known under the title of the act of abjuration, enjoined all subjects to swear allegiance to the king, by the title of *lawful* and *rightful* king, and his heirs, according to the act of settlement: this oath was to be

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* From Charles Townshend, Esq.

† December 30.—Orford Papers.

Period I. taken by all persons in any office, trust, or employment, and to be tendered
 1676 to 1714. by two justices of the peace, to any person whom they should suspect of
 disaffection. Even this clause met with no opposition, and the great struggle was confined to the question, whether this oath should be compulsory or free. The enemies of the Protestant succession could not venture to oppose the oath of abjuration, but they exerted their whole strength to render it null, by contending, that it ought not to be imposed by force, but left to the option of every person to take or to decline it. The contest on this occasion was so great, and the two parties so equal, that this important clause was only carried in a full house by one voice.

168 to 187.

This great victory being thus obtained, it was thought proper to extend the oath to all ecclesiastical persons, and members of the universities. Sir Charles Hedges accordingly moved for an addition to the clause, which should comprehend all clergymen, fellows of colleges, and school-masters. Walpole having, during his residence at Cambridge, observed many instances where masters and fellows of colleges had never taken the oath of allegiance, seconded the motion for this amendment, and it was carried without a division; so effectual was the triumph of the Whigs, over the friends of the dethroned family. Horace Walpole alludes to his conduct on this memorable occasion, in a letter from Cambridge*, in which he describes the consternation of the nonjurors, on being compelled to take the oath of abjuration, and the indignation which they expressed against his brother, for his zeal in promoting the Protestant succession.

When the bill was moved in the house of lords, the Tories proposed, and warmly supported an additional amendment, excusing the peerage from the obligation of the oath. Nottingham particularly distinguished himself in its favour, and spoke with so much agitation, that the tears fell from his eyes†. But the singular absurdity and injustice of exempting the upper house from the same strictness of engagements to which the lower house had consented, met with the fate which it deserved: The motion was negatived. Although the Tories could not carry their question, they succeeded in adding two amendments, with a view still farther to protract the business. The opponents of the Protestant succession in the lower house, coincided with their intentions, for the bill sent down to the commons, with these amendments, was not returned to the lords till the 3d of March. It was there detained several days, and was not sent back to the commons

* Feb. 28, 1701-2. See Correspondence.

† Etough's Papers.

till the 7th, on a Saturday *, in the hope of deferring it till the Monday; and as the king then lay upon his death bed, almost at the last extremity, such a delay would have been fatal. But the precautions of William, and the vigilance of the Whigs defeated their well-laid scheme. The commons adjourned till six in the afternoon; in this interval, the king, who was so weak that he could not hold a pen in his hand, stamped his name to the commission for passing the acts. When the commons met, a message was brought from the lords, importing that the king had signed the commission, and desiring the house to come up. The speaker, accordingly, accompanied as usual with other members, went out, and returned with the report, that the royal assent had been given to the bill, and to two other acts. No event ever happened in a more critical moment; for William expired between eight and nine on the following morning. Thus the last exercise of his kingly power, was his assent to the oath of abjuration, emphatically styled, by the friends of the dethroned family, his *curfed legacy*. "Thus, observes a contemporary † author, he confirmed to posterity, with his expiring breath, that liberty, civil and religious, for which during his life he had so often fought in the field; which he was indefatigably augmenting and establishing in his parliament; which he was continually bringing to perfection in his councils, and which, on his accession to the throne, he promised (as he faithfully performed) to secure against all future attempts to subvert it."

March 8.

* Journals of the Lords and Commons.

† Toland.

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CHAPTER THE FOURTH:

1702—1710.

Accession of Anne.—Walpole makes a Motion in Opposition to Sir Edward Seymour.—Distinguishes himself in the Proceedings on the Aylesbury Election.—Noticed by Earl Godolphin, and the Duke of Marlborough.—Appointed one of the Seven Council to the Lord High Admiral—Secretary at War, and Treasurer to the Navy.—Nominated one of the Managers for the House of Commons, upon the Prosecution of Sacheverel.—His Speech, and Publication on that Occasion.

IN the first parliament of queen Anne, Walpole was returned for Lynn Regis, where his family had long possessed a permanent interest. For this borough he was regularly chosen, until he was created earl of Orford.

Supports the
Whigs.

Although he had spoken frequently in the house of commons, yet the first time in which he appears upon record, on a public * question, in the parliamentary debates, was on the 23d of December 1702, when Sir Edward Seymour having carried a resolution to bring in a bill for the resumption of all grants made in the reign of king William, and applying them to the service of the Public; Walpole moved, that all the grants made in the reign of the late king James, should also be resumed; but his motion was negatived †. The proposition of Sir Edward Seymour, directed against the Whigs, who had received the principal grants from king William, was supported by a Tory ministry, and easily passed through a Tory parliament; and the counter motion by so young a member, levelled against the grants made to the Tories, and in opposition to one of their great leaders, sufficiently proved that Walpole was rising into consequence, and had decidedly enlisted himself under the banner of the Whigs ‡.

In

* Notitia Parliam.—Lists of the House of Commons in Chandler's Proceedings of Parliament.

† Journals of the House of Commons. Tindal, v. 15. p. 474.

‡ As a proof of Walpole's activity, and an indication of the principles and party which he supported, I have extracted, from the Journals of the House of Commons, the several ques-

tions in which he was teller, besides those already mentioned, until he was appointed secretary at war.

1702.—February 19th.—Against a clause to be added to a bill, for the further security of his majesty's person and government, that persons who take upon them offices, shall not depart from the communion of the church of England.—February 26th.—Against delaying to

In the celebrated cause concerning the Aylebury election, Walpole distinguished himself in an eminent degree, and attained an high estimation with his party. Complaints of great partiality and injustice in the election of members of parliament, had been continually urged against the sheriffs in the counties, and returning officers in the boroughs, who often found pretexts for rejecting those electors who voted against the members they espoused. When these disputes were brought before the commons, the house seldom entered into the merits of the cause, but usually decided in favour of the candidate who voted with the majority. It was no easy matter to apply a remedy for such a glaring abuse; because all parties, when oppressed, made heavy complaints, and when certain of a majority forgot the grievance against which they had before so loudly exclaimed, and even excused themselves on the necessity of retaliation. At length, after many attempts to obtain justice, Ashby, a freeman, prosecuted William White, constable of Aylebury, for having refused to admit his vote at the election of burgeses. A verdict, with damages, was found in favour of Ashby, but

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1702 to 1713.

1704.

January.

Aylebury
Case.

to read the report of a committee, to consider further of the rights, liberties, and privileges of the house of commons.—March 3d.—In favour of a motion for an instruction to a committee on the bill for granting to his majesty divers subsidies.—1703.—January 5th.—For an amendment to an address, in reply to the queen's message.—1704.—November 14th.—Against leave to bring in a bill for preventing occasional conformity.—December 14th.—Against the said bill.—December 19th.—Against an instruction to a committee, that they have power to receive a clause for the qualification of justices of the peace, in a bill for the better recruiting her majesty's land forces, and the marines.—1705.—January 16th.—For a motion, that a bill be committed for appointing commissioners to treat of an union between England and Scotland, &c.—January 17th.—For a question, that towards the supply, a duty be laid upon all goods imported from the East Indies, Persia, and China, into England, prohibited to be used in England, and from thence to be exported to Ireland, or any of the plantations.—January 27th.—Against a bill, to prevent persons who are entitled by their offices to receive any benefit by public annual taxes, from being members of parliament, while they are in such offices.—February 21st.—For an amendment in a bill for prohibiting all trade and com-

merce with France.—March 14th.—Against a clause in an act for preventing the further growth of popery.—December 8th.—Against a motion for a committee to consider of the resolution of the lords, declaring those who should insinuate the church to be in danger, enemies to the queen, the church, and the kingdom.—December 19th.—For the second reading of a bill, for better security of her majesty's person and government, and the succession in the Protestant line.—1706.—February 4th.—For an amendment made by the lords in the same bill.—February 13th.—Against a clause to prevent irregular listing of men, to be added to the bill for recruiting the army and marines.—1707.—February 10th.—For an amendment to a bill for securing the church of England, as by law established.—February 22d.—Against a motion for an instruction to the committee on the Bill of Union, that the subjects of this kingdom shall be for ever free from any oath, test, or subscription, within this kingdom, contrary to or inconsistent with the true Protestant religion of the church of England, as is already provided for the subjects of Scotland, with respect to their Presbyterian government.—December 12th.—For an amendment to the above bill.—1708.—January 29th. For the adjournment of a debate on the English forces in the service of Spain and Portugal, in 1707.

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1676 to 1714.

reversed by the court of Queen's Bench. The cause being carried by appeal to the house of lords, the order of the Queen's Bench was set aside, and the verdict given at the assizes confirmed. The Tories, who formed the majority of the commons, considering these proceedings as an encroachment on their privileges, and esteeming that house the judge of such questions as related to the election of its members, the solicitor-general, Sir Simon Harcourt, moved, "That the sole right of examining and determining all matters relating to the election of members to serve in parliament, except in such cases as are otherwise provided for by an act of parliament, is in the house of commons; and that neither the qualification of the electors, or the right of the persons elected, is elsewhere cognizable or determinable." The question was debated with uncommon vehemence and ability; on the side of the Tories, principally by Harley, St. John, Harcourt, and Sir Edward Seymour; on the side of the Whigs, by Sir Joseph Jekyll, Cowper, King, the marquis of Hartington, and Walpole. He took a short, but sensible part in the debate; and after arguing with much judgment against the motion, proposed to omit that part of it which concerned the qualification of the electors. This amendment, seconded by the marquis of Hartington, was negatived by a majority of only eighteen, and the original question carried.

Yet, although the Whigs were defeated, their arguments produced a strong effect on the public mind. A general discontent prevailed against the severity of the commons, for committing to Newgate Ashby, and four other inhabitants of Aylesbury, who had likewise sued the returning officers; for preventing their having a Habeas Corpus, and for addressing the queen not to permit a motion for a writ of error in the house of lords, which would have released them from prison, and for declaring all solicitors and council, who should prosecute or plead in any such cause, guilty of a high breach of privilege. The final decision of this important controversy was suspended by the perseverance of the lords, who declared, that a writ of error was a matter of right, not of grace; by the steady determination of the queen not to obstruct, in favour of the house of commons, the course of judicial proceedings in the courts of law; and by the manly opposition of lord chief justice Holt. These contrary pretensions produced a violent quarrel between the two houses, which was terminated by the dissolution of parliament*. Although the question was never revived, yet from this time, the house of commons considered itself as the sole judge of the qualifications of electors, and of all other matters which related to the return of members. It was principally

* See Journals of the Lords and Commons.—Raymond's Reports, p. 938.—Proceedings in the great case of Ashby and White, and in the case of the Aylesbury men.—Chandler.—Tindal.
owing

owing to these resolutions, that the decisions, in regard to controverted elections, were seldom regulated by the merits of the case; but became questions of personal or political expediency; nor was this abuse corrected, until the act, known by the name of Grenville's Bill, referred to a committee, chosen by ballot, and acting upon oath, the final decision in all contested elections.

At this period of his life, Walpole began to be held in high estimation by the great leaders of the Whigs, and was particularly noticed by the duke of Devonshire, the earl of Sunderland, lord Halifax, and lord Somers. Among the persons of his own age, with whom he entered into habits of close intimacy, were James, afterwards earl Stanhope, Spencer Compton, afterwards earl of Wilmington, the marquis of Hartington, eldest son of the duke of Devonshire, whose family uniformly proved themselves his firm friends and adherents, and viscount Townshend, who was then just beginning to acquire political importance. But Walpole owed his rise and consequence less to his connections, than to his own talents and situation. A member of parliament of a great Whig family, whose interest brought in three * representatives, and who had distinguished himself in the debates for sound sense, manly argument, and perspicuous eloquence, could not long remain unnoticed. Nor was his reputation solely confined to the party whose cause he so warmly espoused. The lord treasurer Godolphin †, at a period when a Whig was his aversion, discerned his rising abilities, favoured him with his immediate protection, and strongly recommended him to the patronage of the Duke of Marlborough.

The firm adherence of Walpole to his party, was, however, a hindrance to his preferment, as long as Godolphin continued to act solely with the Tories; but no sooner had the leaders of the Whigs regained their lost popularity, and appeared secure of a majority in the ensuing parliament, than the lord treasurer brought several into office, and opened to others a prospect of preferment. The duke of Newcastle was declared privy seal, in the room of the marquis of Normanby; and among the inferior places of government, Walpole was appointed one of the council ‡ to prince George of Denmark, lord high admiral of England. This first service was attended with many disagreeable circumstances: Great mismanagement, both at home and at sea, was imputed to the navy board. Admiral Churchill, brother to the duke of Marlborough, possessed, at this period, the greatest influence at the admiralty, and was accused, with some of the other members, of negligence and corruption.

* Two for Castle Rising, and one for Lynn Regis.

† From the late earl of Orford.—Etough's Summary Account of Sir Robert Walpole.

‡ Walpole Papers.—MS. account of Sir Robert Walpole, in King's College, Cambridge.—Collins's Peerage.

Chapter 4.
1702 to 1710.

(1770.)

Highly
esteemed by
his party.

Noticed by
Godolphin.

1705.

March 1705.

Appointed
one of the
council to
the lord high
admiral.

June.

To

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To him the merchants attributed their losses; their loud complaints were heard in both houses, and zealously supported by the principal Whigs. Walpole endeavoured to excuse and mitigate the conduct of the council, and gave a proof of the spirit that marked the decision of his character. Being reproached by one of his friends for acting against his party, he replied, "I never can be so mean to sit at a board, when I cannot utter a word in its defence *." But although he conceived, that it was unbecoming in him not to defend those with whom he sat in council, and although he well knew that their faults had been exaggerated, yet he found sufficient abuses to call for immediate correction. He laboured therefore to prove to the board, the necessity of assuming a more decisive conduct; and he so far ingratiated himself with his fellow counsellors †, that his advice was followed, and his plans were usually adopted.

The union of spirit and prudence, in so young a man, still farther recommended him to the notice of Godolphin, who appears to have placed in him the most implicit confidence, and to have availed himself of his advice and assistance on many important occasions.

1705.
October.
New parliament.

At the meeting of the new parliament, Walpole seconded the motion, made by lord Granby, to nominate Smith speaker, who was favoured by the Whigs, against Bromley, who was proposed by the Tories. The contest was carried on with great heat and animosity between the two parties; but the majority in favour of Smith proved the triumph of the Whigs.

Reconciles
Godolphin
with the
Whigs.

Walpole had already exerted himself with considerable success, in cementing this union between Godolphin and the Whigs; but he now came forward with still greater effect, and strenuously exhorted his patron to obtain the zealous co-operation of that powerful and popular party. He urged, that the leaders of the Tories in the house of commons, were directed and influenced by his enemies and rivals; and censured the spirit of bitterness and violence, of umbrage and persecution which had been lately predominant in all their measures; he represented, in the strongest terms, that the Tories, although they had been roused by the general energy of the nation to approve and second the grand alliance, were yet averse to the continuance of the war with France; and that on the contrary, the Whigs were not only sincere, but enthusiasts in their zeal for the depression of the house of Bourbon.

His representations were listened to with attention, and gradually had their effect; Godolphin availed himself of his intimacy with Devonshire, Halifax, Somers, and Townshend, to arrange the coalition, which afterwards

* From the late lord Walpole, to the late earl of Hardwick.

† Etough's Account of Sir Robert Walpole.

took

took place. If the union of the Treasurer with this party was not so complete and uniform as some of the zealous Whigs expected, the failure proceeded from his apprehensions of the queen's displeasure, his inclination to the principles of the Tories, and his affection for the dethroned family, which was never entirely obliterated.

In consequence of these repugnant principles, the administration was a motley mixture of Tories and Whigs, perpetually at variance, and secretly caballing to supplant each other. At first the Tories seemed predominant in the cabinet; but the ascendancy of the Whigs soon appeared, from the nomination of Cowper to be lord keeper of the great seal, in the room of sir Nathaniel Wright; yet Harley still continued secretary of state, and through the means of Mrs. Masham, was gradually undermining the influence of Godolphin and Marlborough. During these cabals, the leaders of the Whigs, perceiving that the queen favoured the Tories, forced Charles earl of Sunderland into the office of secretary of state, in the place of sir Charles Hedges, in direct opposition to the avowed wish of the queen, and in contradiction* to the secret inclinations both of Godolphin and Marlborough. The appointment of Sunderland was a decided victory, and from that moment the whole administration adopted the principles, and followed the measures of the Whigs. After some unavailing struggles, Harley was dismissed from the office of secretary of state, and succeeded by Henry Boyle, afterwards lord Carleton, who proved his friendship for Walpole, by appointing his brother, Horace, his private secretary; and the subsequent nomination of lord Somers to the presidentship of the council, completed the triumph of the party.

Walpole himself was not overlooked in the change. He was selected by Marlborough as the most proper person to succeed his favourite, St. John, in the delicate office of secretary at war†; an office which required a person of no less prudence than ability. During the absence of Marlborough, the secretary at war transacted the business of the department personally with the queen; he was to correspond officially and confidentially with the commander in chief; and had the difficult task to conciliate the capricious temper of the duchess of Marlborough, who interfered in all business, governed her husband with the most absolute sway, and who now treated the queen with those marks of disrespect, which finally occasioned her own disgrace, and the fall of the Whig administration.

* Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough.

† The office of secretary at war was destined to Cardonnel, confidential secretary to the

duke of Marlborough; but as he was abroad with the duke, Walpole retained that place until his return.

Chapter 4.
1703 to 1710.

Changes in
the cabinet.

December
1706.

Whig admin-
istration.

February
1708.

Appointed
secretary at
war.

On

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1676 to 1714.
1709.
Treasurer of
the navy.

On the decease of Sir Thomas Littleton, Walpole was appointed treasurer of the navy, which office he held for a short time, with that of secretary at war.

In addition to his parliamentary abilities, Walpole endeared himself to Godolphin by activity and punctuality in business, order and precision in accounts, great knowledge of finance, and the most engaging manners. The treasurer admitted him into his most secret councils, entrusted him with the delicate office of composing the speeches from the throne, and from the time of Harley's resignation, committed to him the management of the house of commons*. Nothing will place the prudent and conciliating character of the young senator in a stronger light, than that Godolphin and Marlborough, who never cordially coalesced with the Whigs, should take into their confidence, one who had proved himself, and still continued to prove himself, so ardently attached to that party; at the same time he was so far from forfeiting the favour of the Whigs, that he was equally beloved and trusted by their leaders.

Manager for
the trial of
Sacheverel.
1710.

In 1710, Walpole was appointed one of the managers for the impeachment of Sacheverel, and principally conducted that business in the house of commons. To bring Sacheverel to a trial, and to distinguish him with an impeachment, managed in the most solemn manner, for a miserable performance, which, without such notice, would have speedily sunk into oblivion, was an inexcusable degradation of the dignity of the house of commons, and affords a striking instance of the height of folly and infatuation to which the spirit of party will carry even the wisest men. It is well known that this measure was suggested by Godolphin, who was severely satirised in the sermon under the name of Volpone, and that it was warmly opposed by Somers and the Whig lords. Walpole, in conformity to their opinion, endeavoured to prevail on Godolphin to desist from the prosecution; but all arguments were ineffectual. The minister, in this instance, laid aside his usual circumspection, and, irritated by a passion unworthy of the occasion, insisted with so much vehemence, that he finally extorted the consent of his colleagues in office.

Walpole, acting in conformity to their resolutions, conducted himself on the occasion with no less prudence than spirit. It fell to his share to support the first article of the charge; that Sacheverel had suggested and maintained, "That the necessary means used to bring about the happy revolution, were
" odious and unjustifiable; that his late majesty, in his declaration, disclaim-
" ed the least imputation of resistance, and that to impute resistance to the

* Etough's Account of Sir Robert Walpole.

" said

"said revolution, was to cast black and odious colours upon his late majesty
"and the said revolution."

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On this delicate subject, which it is so difficult to define and restrain within the proper bounds, while the doctrine of resistance is allowed, in cases of extreme necessity, he spoke with equal precision, moderation, and energy, and drew the happy medium between the extremes of licentiousness and rational liberty; between a just opposition to arbitrary measures, and a due submission to a free and well-regulated government*. While he reprobated, in the strongest terms, the doctrines of divine indefeasible right, and passive obedience, he by no means encouraged, even in the slightest degree, any vague notions of resistance in undetermined cases, or upon trivial motives; but established hereditary right as the essence of the British constitution, never to be transgressed, except in such instances as justified the revolution.

The result of this ill-judged trial was far different from the event which Godolphin and his friends weakly expected. The triumph of the Tories was evident from the lenity of the sentence, which only ordered, that the sermon should be burnt by the common hangman, and suspended Sacheverel from preaching during three years. The unpopularity of the ministers was highly increased; the inclination of the queen, in favour of their opponents, was ostentatiously manifested; the populace was inflamed; and the consequence of this act of imprudence and precipitation, was the downfall of those who hoped to find, in the condemnation of Sacheverel, the revival of their popularity, and the establishment of their power.

It may not perhaps, in this place, be improper to observe, that the fatal and mischievous consequences which resulted from the trial of Sacheverel, had a permanent effect on the future conduct of Walpole, when he was afterwards placed at the head of administration. It infused into him an aversion and horror at any interposition in the affairs of the church, and led him to assume, occasionally, a line of conduct which appeared to militate against those principles of general toleration, to which he was naturally inclined.

Soon after the removal of the Whig administration, Walpole published a pamphlet on this † remarkable trial, entitled, Four Letters to a Friend in North Britain, upon the publishing the Trial of Dr. Sacheverel. The first letter states the particulars which preceded the trial; the second, those which

* This speech, written in his own hand, is still extant among the Orford Papers. The printed speech, in the account of Sacheverel's trial, is taken from it verbatim. Burke has quoted a sensible passage of it in his Appeal from the new to the old Whigs, p. 65.

† This pamphlet is erroneously attributed to Arthur Mainwaring, by Tindal, and the Biographia Britannica. See Royal and Noble Authors; Article, Earl of Orford.

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accompanied it; the third, those which followed it; and the fourth displays the consequences. The purport of this publication, was to prove in clear and familiar language, and by a plain, but strong deduction of reasoning, that the abettors of Sacheverel were the abettors of the Pretender; and that those who agreed with him to condemn such resistance as dethroned the father, could have no other meaning than the restitution of the son.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH:

1710.

Intrigues and Cabals which occasioned the Removal of the Whig Administration.—Walpole holds a confidential Correspondence with the Duke of Marlborough, Lord Townshend, and Horace Walpole.—Rejects the Offers and despises the Threats of Harley.—Refuses to take a Part in the new Administration.

Removal of
the Whig ad-
ministration.

WALPOLE now began to enjoy, in the possession of an honourable and lucrative office, the reward of his able and uniform conduct, and had the pride of seeing his country successful beyond the example of former ages, since the days of Elizabeth, under a great and wise administration, in which he bore an active part. Marlborough, Godolphin, Somers, Sunderland, Wharton, Cowper, Halifax, and Townshend, occupied the first posts of government, were united in the same cause, acted with the same views, and promoted the honour and advantage of England by the most vigorous and spirited measures; but he did not long feel this satisfaction, for at the very moment when the country was reaping the fruits of their wisdom, foresight, and energy, the ministry was removed. Had not this change taken place, the king of France must have accepted the terms of peace offered by England, and unequivocally compelled his grandson, Philip, to renounce the crown of Spain. St. Simon * calls the intrigues which introduced a Tory administration that saved France, *les miracles de Londres*. The king of Prussia †, also speaking of Marlborough, says,

* *Memoires secrets du regne de Louis XIV, par Louis duc de St. Simon.*

† *Dialogue Des morts Marlborough, Eugene, Lichtenstein.*

What!

"What! Hoechstet, Ramilies, Oudernarde, Malplaquet, were not able to defend the name of that great man; and even victory itself could not shield him against envy and detraction? What part," he adds, "would England have acted without that true hero? he supported and raised her, and would have exalted her to the pinnacle of greatness, but for those wretched female intrigues, of which France took advantage to occasion his disgrace. Louis the Fourteenth was lost, if Marlborough had retained his power two years more." In fact, the removal of the Whig ministry retarded, instead of accelerating the peace, because it encouraged Louis the Fourteenth to break the congress of Gertruydenberg, threw the queen entirely into his power, and the prediction of Marlborough, in a letter * to Walpole, was eventually verified. "If the schemers are fond of a peace; they are not very dexterous, for most certainly what is doing in England, will be a great encouragement to France for continuing the war."

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1710.

There never was any event in the annals of this country attended with more disgraceful consequences to England, or followed by more fatal effects to Europe in general, than the dismissal of those great men, who formed that glorious and successful administration in the reign of queen Anne, called, by way of distinction, the Whig administration.

1710.

Our regret at their fall, is still further heightened from the consideration, that it was occasioned by the overbearing temper of a mistress of the robes †, and principally effected by the petty intrigues of a bed-chamber-woman ‡, against her benefactress. The surprising influence which the duchess of Marlborough had acquired over the weak and irresolute mind of the good queen Anne, is well described in that extraordinary apology of her conduct, which the duchess gave to the public. We there find a princess of the most placid temper, fascinated by the captivating manners of an artful, but agreeable woman; a queen, imbued with high notions of regal dignity, and a most exact observer of forms, throwing off all etiquette, and corresponding with her favourite, under the fictitious names of Morley and Freeman. We find the duchess, after having engaged the affections of her mistress by the most assiduous attention, relapsing into gross neglect, and in consequence gradually sinking in favour. We find her at the same time either not perceiving, or striving to conceal from others, and even from herself, the decline of her ascendancy, and increasing the disgust of the queen, by her rude and intemperate behaviour. Unfortunately, the duchess of Marlborough had so

* See Correspondence, June 23d, 1710.

† Duchess of Marlborough. — ‡ Abigail Hill, Mrs. and afterwards lady Masham.

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much credit and power with the duke, her husband, and Godolphin, that to remove her it became necessary to remove the ministry, over whom she possessed so strong an influence. The artful and cautious manner by which Mrs. Masham supplanted the duchess of Marlborough, is also related in this apology, which may be called a manual of court intrigues, and her cabals with Harley, are detailed in the writings of Swift, who derived his information on that subject, from the most unquestionable authorities.

The Whigs were beginning to lose their popularity, when the trial of Sacheverel raised a ferment in the nation, and excited a general outcry against them. The ministry, and particularly the duke of Marlborough, were accused of protracting the war for their own interests; and this calumny was urged so boldly and repeatedly, that it was finally believed; the terms also, which the British plenipotentiaries attempted to exact from Louis the Fourteenth, though strictly consonant to true policy, and founded on the principles laid down at the commencement of the war, were declared illiberal, and only advanced to prevent that haughty monarch from acceding to them.

From an impartial review of the numerous papers, to which I have had access, and from a diligent comparison of the political writings of those times, I feel the strongest conviction, that the ministry were sincere in proposing the terms of peace at the congress of Gertruydenberg; that they were even anxious to lower the demands of the Dutch, and make them as moderate as were consistent with the security of Europe, and that they were sanguine in their expectations that Louis the Fourteenth, circumstanced as he then was, would accede to them. It also appears, from the Diary of Lord Cowper, that he was the only one of the ministers who harboured a doubt on the subject, and that by expressing that doubt he incurred the indignation of Godolphin *. During the trial of Sacheverel, when their unpopularity increased,

Intrigues of
Harley.

* 23^d Janry. 1709, Sunday, lord treasurer at his house, read duke Marlborough's letter, dated abo^t 15 days before, from Hague; that Buys and 3 of the Burg^{rs} of Amsterdam, and the Pensioner had rec^d sometime since, by overtures of peace from France, viz^t to quit Spain and the West Indies, and to give a barrier to states in Flanders, that 'twas a great secret, known only as above; that the Pensioner said he should be ruined if known he had kept it from the states so long. Lord treasurer said, he shew'd it me by queen's order; I advis'd, and it was agreed only to put the proposals more particularly, and at large, as soon as possible, several intermediate debates in cabinet, shew'd by lord treasurer.

April 12, the following letter from duke Marlborough, Hague, April 19, 1709. The deputies of States Gen^l were with me yesterday abo^t 2 hours, the which time was spent upon the subject of their barrier. After I had given them all the assurances I thought necessary of the intentions and inclinations of the queen and English nation, of concurring with them in what might be reasonable for their barrier, I did endeavour to cure them of any jealousy they might have of my being particularly concerned. I hope it has had a good effect with 'em; however, I have done all I can, and shall do so to keep them in good humour, if possible. The inclosed is what they desire for their barrier. It incloses what might be thought a great kingdom.

creased, Harley was admitted, by the introduction of Mrs. Masham, to several private interviews with the queen, in which he endeavoured to persuade her to dismiss the ministry, but as she was of a timid, procrastinating disposition, he had great difficulty in succeeding. Not being able to prevail upon her to take a bold step, he artfully led her, by insensible degrees, to the accomplishment of his scheme. With this view, he persuaded her to consult the duke * of Shrewsbury, whom he had previously gained, and in whom she placed great confidence, on these points; "Would the public credit suffer by the change of administration? Could that measure be carried into effect without a dissolution of parliament? or would that dissolution be attended with danger? Could a peace be negotiated with safety to the queen, and with honour to the allies?"

The duke of Shrewsbury having given his opinion in the affirmative, and supported the queen in her resolution, Harley persuaded her to appoint earl Rivers lieutenant of the Tower, in opposition to the recommendation of Marlborough †, and to bestow a regiment, vacant by the death of the earl of Essex, on Mr. Hill, brother to Mrs. Masham. As the promotion of this officer was highly disagreeable to the duchess of Marlborough, and must tend to lessen the duke's weight and authority in the army, he remonstrated in person, and urged his objections in such a manly and spirited manner, as displeased the queen, and induced her to answer, that he would do well to advise with his friends. Godolphin having no less ineffectually represented to her, that the duke's long and faithful services, deserved a more favourable treatment, Marlborough retired in disgust to Windsor, and wrote a high

kingdom. I hope to persuade them from some of it; so that I beg very few may see it: but when I have done all that may be in my power, I shall then send it to the secret, so that it may come regularly to her majesty, and the cab. council. Mons^r Rouillies messenger returned last night, but I am told he desires two days to decypher his dispatches; so that Tuesday will be the soonest I shall be able to give you an account of this matter. This is so critical a time, that I dare not be of any opinion: but I tremble when I think that a very little impatience may ruin a sure game. Barrier, Dendm^e, Chateau de Ghent, Dame, Ostend, Newport, Furnes, Knocq, Ipre, Menin, Lille, Tournay, Condé, Mons, Valenciennes, Maubeuge, Charleroy, Namur, Luxembourg, Sier, Haut-Geldre en propre, permission to fortify Hall, St le Demer, the head of Flanders, with

the forts on the Scheldt; Huy, Leige, and Bon.

Note, during the remaining transaction of the intended peace, which was laid in all its steps before whole cabinet, lord treasurer, lord president Somers, and all other lords, did ever seem confident of a peace. My own distrust was so remarkable, that I was once perfectly chid by the lord treasurer, never so much in any other case, for saying such orders would be proper if the French King signed the preliminary treaty. He resented my making a question of it, and said there could be no doubt, &c. For my part, nothing but seeing so great men believe it, could ever incline me to think France reduced so low as to accept such conditions.— Lord Cowper's Diary; Hardwicke Papers.

* Life of the Duke of Shrewsbury.

† Swift's Memoirs relating to the Change in the Queen's Ministry, v. XV. p. 20.

spirited,

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spirited, but indiscreet letter; which, after stating his readiness to obey her commands, expressed his regret that all his services could not protect him from the malice of a bedchamber woman, and requested instant permission to retire. Before the queen had received this letter, she became apprehensive lest the resignation of the duke at this critical juncture, should cause discontents in the nation, and alarmed at the threats of Sunderland, to propose in the house of lords the removal of Mrs. Masham, ordered Godolphin to inform Marlborough, that he might dispose of the regiment. In reply to his letter, she also expressed her concern at what had passed, and by this condescension engaged him to continue the command of the army in Flanders. But although the queen yielded in this instance, she persevered in her intentions, and soon afterwards gave unequivocal proofs of her resolution, by dismissing the marquis of Kent from the post of lord chamberlain, and conferring that office on the duke of Shrewsbury, against the inclinations of the ministry.

Walpole
corresponds
with Marlbo-
rough.

Laments the
disunion of
the Whigs.

During these transactions Walpole maintained an official and confidential correspondence with the duke of Marlborough, while absent from England; with Lord Townshend, plenipotentiary at the congress of Gertruydenberg; and with his brother Horace Walpole, private secretary to Lord Townshend. The whole of this interesting correspondence is not extant, but a sufficient part is still preserved * to do honour to the persons who were engaged in it, to throw a new light over the transactions of that period, and to illustrate the conduct of the ministers on that memorable occasion. It shews that their fall was owing no less to their own disunion, than to the intrigues of Mrs. Masham and Harley, and the opposition of the Tories. It plainly appears to have been the opinion of Walpole, that more active and decisive measures should have been pursued before the removal of Sunderland. He lamented the division of the ministry, the jealousy and coldness of Godolphin, who would not make any attempt to save Sunderland; he conjectured that his disgrace would be followed by the dismissal of Godolphin and Marlborough, which they did not foresee, or else their disinclination to Sunderland overcame the apprehensions which they ought to have entertained for their own safety.

Walpole was at that time in a subordinate situation. He had great obligations both to Godolphin and Marlborough, and he was joined in opinion with the Whig leaders. He had therefore a very delicate part to act; yet he wrote to Marlborough with great spirit and freedom; and even ventured to advise him not to offend the queen, by refusing obstinately to promote the

* See Correspondence, Period I.

husband

husband and brother of Mrs. Masham; although such advice was most likely to offend, as in fact it did offend, the duchess of Marlborough. It appears also from these letters, that Marlborough and Godolphin meanly tampered with the duke of Shrewsbury, and attempted, through his influence over the queen, to prevent the dissolution of the parliament; instead of boldly and manfully coming forward, they acted this underhand part, and suffered by this dilatory and equivocal conduct Harley to divide and disunite the Whigs.

Perhaps it may be conjectured, that if on the dismissal of Sunderland, which was sure to be followed by other changes, notwithstanding the positive assurances of the queen to the contrary, Godolphin and all his friends had instantly resigned their places, and if the duke of Marlborough had given up his command of the army, so unanimous and bold a measure would have dispirited the queen, and alarmed the Tories. Under these impressions she could not have ventured to make a sudden and total change; she would probably have been checked by the apprehension of alienating the whole party of the Whigs, who then formed a large majority in parliament, and of disgusting the moneyed men, many of whom made the public credit personal to Godolphin, and scrupling to advance money upon the faith of the nation, offered it upon his single word*. She would have dreaded the remonstrances of the emperor and the Dutch, who justly considered the great successes of the war as principally owing to the military talents of Marlborough.

Such was the opinion of Walpole; and Sir Richard Temple, afterwards Lord Cobham, expressed his sentiments in favour of a general resignation, in a spirited letter to his friend Walpole, with whom he then acted, and by whom he had been strongly recommended to the duke of Marlborough. But, both Walpole and his brother Horace foresaw and lamented that the Whigs, instead of adopting this decisive and manly conduct, would be divided among themselves, and that several would listen to the insidious overtures of Harley. In effect, that artful minister flattered them with the hopes that the parliament should not be dissolved, and representing the danger which would threaten the constitution and religion, should their whole body desert the queen, he used the remarkable expressions, "That a Whig game was intended at the bottom," and that his great object would be to promote the Protestant succession†.

These representations and promises had a due effect, and helped to break the phalanx, which, had it remained firm and compact, must have been invincible.

* Life of the duke of Shrewsbury.

† Cowper's Diary; Hardwicke Papers.

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Many of the Whigs hesitated, and delayed their resignation. Newcastle remained in power until he was removed. The duke of Somerset was persuaded by the queen to keep his place, but affected to declare that he would not attend the privy council; and even Halifax, the stern champion of the party, is said to have availed himself of his long acquaintance with Harley, and to have so effectually treated with him in private, that none of his own relations were displaced*. Marlborough retained the command of the army only to be dismissed with ignominy†, when his services were no longer thought necessary. Devonshire, Henry Boyle, Wharton, Somers, and Cowper, were among the few leaders who resigned with spirit and dignity.

Resignation
of Lord Cow-
per.

Lord Chancellor Cowper, in particular, behaved with unexampled firmness and honour. He rejected with scorn all the overtures which Harley made, in the most humble and supplicating manner, to induce him to continue in office. When he waited on the queen to resign, she strongly opposed his resolution, and returned the seals three times, after he had laid them down. At last, when she could not prevail, she commanded him to take them; adding, I beg it as a favour of you, if I may use that expression. Cowper could not refuse to obey her commands; but after a short pause, taking up the seals, he said that he would not carry them out of the palace, except on the promise, that the surrender of them would be accepted on the morrow. "The arguments on my side," to use the words of Lord Cowper himself, "and professions, and the repeated importunities of her majesty, drew this audience into the length of three quarters of an hour‡." On the following day, his resignation was accepted, and soon afterwards the seals were given to Sir Simon Harcourt.

Walpole re-
jects the
overtures of
Harley.

Walpole acted on this occasion an honourable and disinterested part. In the wreck of this great administration, Harley, desirous of retaining in power several of the Whigs, with a view to counterbalance the credit of St. John and Harcourt, who already began to give him umbrage, endeavoured to gain Walpole. He made very flattering advances; told him that he was worth half his party§, and pressed him to continue in administration; but all his efforts proved ineffectual.

Harley finding at last, that promises and flattery were employed without avail, had recourse to threats. Hawes, one of his confidential emissaries, who was afterwards receiver of the customs, informed Walpole, that the treasurer had in his possession a note for the contract of forage, indorsed by him; this

* Cunningham's History of Great Britain, vol. 2. p. 305. Letter from Horace Walpole to Etough, September 21st 1752. See Correspondence, Period II.

† The manner in which Marlborough was treated by the new ministry, appears by two

letters from Bolingbroke to Drummond. See Correspondence, Period I, 1711.

‡ Cowper's Diary.

§ Letter to Mr. Pulteney, in answer to his Remarks, p. 47.

insinuation

insinuation was made in such a manner, as to imply, that if Walpole would come over to the new ministry, this note should not be produced against him. But he, no less disdainful of menaces than before he was regardless of promises, rejected all overtures. In a letter* written on the 19th of September, he observes to his friend general Stanhope; "I believe, in all probability, this " will be the last letter I shall write from this office. We are in such a way " here, as I cannot describe. But you can imagine nothing worse than you " will hear. The parliament is not yet dissolved, but this week will certainly " determine it. Dear Stanhope, God prosper you, and pray make haste to us, " that you may see what you will not believe if it were told you." A few days after writing this letter, he retired from the office of secretary at war.

Chapter 5.
1710.

Sept. 29.
Retires from
the office of
secretary at
war.

Harley, however, was not repulsed by the first refusal of Walpole to support his administration. He had too much success with many of the Whigs, not to exert every effort to gain a man whose talents and eloquence he held in the highest estimation. He suffered him to continue in his place of treasurer of the navy, several months after the Whig ministry were entirely routed. He sent several messages, and held several conversations with him, to persuade him to moderate his opposition against the new measures; but his constant answer was, "Make a safe and honourable peace, and preserve " the Protestant succession, and you will have no opposition-†."

CHAPTER THE SIXTH:

1711—1713.

Conduct of Walpole in Opposition.—Ablely defends the late Administration against the Charge of not accounting for the public Expenditure.—Accused of Breach of Trust and Corruption when Secretary at War.—Committed to the Tower.—Expelled the House, and incapacitated from sitting in the present Parliament.—Visited by Persons of the first Distinction and Abilities.—Writes an able Defence of himself.

AS Walpole dignified and supported an administration prosperous at home and glorious abroad, so when it was vilified and disgraced, he made animated replies to the attacks of a powerful and irritated party. During

Chap. 6.
1711 to 1713.
Supports the
late adminis-
tration.

* Walpole Papers,

† Etough's Papers; Horace Walpole to Etough, Oct. 14, 1752.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

the intervening period, from his resignation to the death of queen Anne, he persevered in attachment to his late associates, and in harassing the new ministers, with great ability, both in and out of parliament. The first instance in which he appeared the champion of the fallen party, was upon the motion of an address to the queen. On this occasion, Walpole, whom Swift, in his history of the four last years of queen Anne, calls *one* Mr. Robert Walpole, proposed an amendment to the address, importing that no peace can be honourable to Great Britain and Europe, if Spain and the Indies are to be allotted to a branch of the house of Bourbon. This clause, which had been carried by the lords, was negatived in the house of commons by a very great majority.

But his subsequent efforts were still more important and useful. The Tories having attempted to arraign the measures of their predecessors in office, turned their principal objections against the management of the revenue; a topic on which it was most easy to delude the public mind, by introducing a series of complicated calculations. This attack was principally levelled against Godolphin, who was accused of having profusely lavished the public money, and of not having accounted for the sums voted by parliament. When several of his former adherents in the house of commons deserted the ex-minister, a few defended his cause, and argued that the clamours raised against him, were merely the effusions of malice and calumny. The insidious attack was masked under the plausible appearance of appointing a committee for examining and stating the public accounts. St. John employed all the powers of his eloquence, to shew the necessity of taking into consideration the national expenditure; maintained that none but those who were enemies to their country, or who would themselves plunder the treasury, would be so bold as to oppose the inquiry; and supported his arguments with the most ardent affectation of zeal for the church and constitution.

Speaks in favour of Godolphin.

No sooner had St. John ceased speaking, than Walpole rose with great spirit to vindicate his patron from the imputation of corruption and malversation. He did not, however, condescend to make any reply to the hypocritical asseveration of St. John, in regard to religion, but confined his remarks to the subject of debate. He explained, in a calm and distinct manner, the accounts of the public expenditure, and confirmed the truth of his report, by the original receipts, and the most authentic testimonies. After having proved that the inquiry was founded on party animosity, he concluded by observing, "If he is accused, who cannot be charged with any crime, or any just suspicion of a crime, and whom the member who spoke last could neither fear nor hate, take heed lest the constitution should receive a wound through his sides. It is obvious, how much the multitude is under the

the influence of bribery, it is obvious, that the people of England are at this moment animated against each other, with a spirit of hatred and rancour. It behoves you, in the first place, to find a remedy for those distempers, which at present are predominant in the civil constitution, and unless you reject this inquiry with becoming indignation, I leave you to conjecture the situation to which this kingdom and government are likely to be exposed *". But the zeal and eloquence of Walpole had no effect; for the committee was appointed, consisting of persons principally Tories, and two notorious Jacobites; all previously determined to arraign the proceedings of the former administration. The result of their inquiry was given in a most extraordinary report, which passed the house on the 12th of April, and was presented to the queen on the same day. After stating the great arrears due from public taxes, many embezzlements and scandalous abuses, evil mismanagement in public offices, and misapplication of parliamentary supplies, it boldly asserted, "That of the monies granted by parliament, and issued for the public service to Christmas 1710, THERE REMAINS UNACCOUNTED FOR, THE SUM OF £.35,302,107, FOR A GREAT PART OF WHICH NO ACCOUNTS HAVE SO MUCH AS BEEN LAID BEFORE THE AUDITORS; and for the rest, though some accompts have been brought in, yet they have not been prosecuted by the accomptants, and finished." This unqualified reproach cast by the house of commons on the ex-ministers, had for a short time a prodigious effect in increasing the unpopularity of the Whigs. The people conceived it to be impossible, that the commons would advance such an assertion, without the most convincing proofs in its favour. A general belief gained ground, that the nation had been deceived and betrayed; fresh confidence was placed in the new ministers, who thus displayed their care for the people, and proved their capacity by contriving such means as might ascertain and secure so vast a debt.

In opposition to these accusations, Walpole again came forth as the champion of his colleagues, and published "The Debts of the Nation stated and considered," and the "Thirty-five Millions accounted for." In these publications, the author, who is called by Arthur Mainwaring, *the best master of figures of any man of his time*, gave, in a small compass, so accurate a scheme of the public debts, especially of the navy, together with the management of the revenues, the anticipations, the debts, and the reasons and necessity of them, as entirely undeceived the public, and refuted the calumnies which had been so industriously raised †. He proved, in a clear and satisfactory

Answered by
Walpole.

* Cunningham's History of Great Britain, vol. 2. p. 349, 350

† Conduct of Robert Walpole, Esquire,

from the beginning of the reign of queen Anne, to the present time, 1717, p. 29.—Tindal.—Oldmixon.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

manner, that the debt of the navy, which was estimated at £.5,130,539, did not exceed £.574,000; and that of the whole £.35,000,000, all but £.4,000,000 had been accounted for.

Walpole had distinguished himself too ably in the house of commons, and by his publications had proved himself too warm a friend of the fallen ministry, and too powerful an adversary to the reigning administration, not to be singled out as one of the sacrifices to be made at the shrine of party vengeance. His expulsion, therefore, from the house of commons was resolved, and a meeting held for the purpose of consulting on the means of proceeding, by the leaders of the opposite party. But the injustice of this act was esteemed so flagrant, and the imputations of guilt so faint and false, that many of those who had united to overturn the late administration, declared their aversion to this malicious design. Bromley*, however, removed their scruples, by declaring that the expulsion of Walpole was the *sum necessarium*, as they could not carry on the business, if he was suffered to continue in the house. It is no wonder, therefore, that his enemies, who could command a majority, should find a plausible pretext. The commissioners of public accounts laid a charge of venality and corruption against him for forage-contracts in Scotland while he was secretary at war.

Accused of
corruption.

December 21.

They accused him of having taken, in two contracts, two notes of hand, one for 500 guineas, the other for £.500, the first of which had been paid, and a receipt given in his name, and of the other £.400 was paid. It appeared, on examination of the witnesses, on oath, that the contractors, rather than admit into their partnership Robert Mann, agent for Walpole, who, according to the tenour of the original agreement, reserved a share for a friend, to have a benefit of the fifth part, if not redeemed by the contractors with a sum of money, had preferred paying the 500 guineas and £.500; and that Mann had received the money for the first note, and had obtained the second note as a deposit for the sum specified to be paid.

1772.
January 17.

In consequence of these reports, Walpole was heard in his own defence, though no particulars of his speech are preserved in the proceedings of parliament; after he had withdrawn, a warm debate took place, which lasted till past ten at night. His friends, on this occasion, supported him with so much zeal, that the house was divided four times in the same sitting; and the ministers, who carried all political questions in this session with only a trifling opposition, gained the motions for his condemnation and expulsion, by a small majority. On the first division, in which Pulteney, then his intimate friend, afterwards his most bitter opponent, was teller, the

* Letter from Horace Walpole to Etough, September 21, 1751.

amendment, to leave out the words, "and notorious corruption," was negatived by a majority of 52. The main question passed in the affirmative by 57. The motion for committing him to the Tower by only twelve; and his expulsion was decreed by 22 *. These small majorities sufficiently prove, either that Walpole possessed great personal influence in the house, or that many of the Tories considered his accusation a scandalous prosecution, and would not give their votes against him. The house, however, resolved, "That Robert Walpole, esquire, was guilty of a high breach of trust, and notorious corruption. That he should be committed prisoner to the Tower of London;" and on a subsequent motion, which was carried only by a majority of twenty votes, that he should be expelled †.

On the next morning, Walpole surrendered himself a prisoner, and was committed to the Tower. It was expected, that he would have petitioned, and submitted himself to the censure of the house; but he refused making any concession, which could imply a consciousness of guilt, and he therefore remained a prisoner until the prorogation of parliament. In the meantime a new writ being issued for Lynn, he was re-chosen for that borough; but a petition being made against the return, by Samuel Taylor, the opposing candidate, the commons resolved, "That having been expelled this house for an high breach of trust in the execution of his office, and notorious corruption, when secretary at war, he was incapable of being re-elected a member to serve in the present parliament ‡."

While he remained a prisoner, he was considered as a martyr to the cause of the Whigs, and repeatedly visited by persons of the highest distinction and abilities, particularly by the duke and duchess of Marlborough, Godolphin, Sunderland, Somers, and Pulteney; and his apartment exhibited the appearance of a crowded levee §.

During his confinement, he had sufficient leisure to compose a clear and judicious vindication of himself, which was published under the title of "*The Case of Mr. Walpole, in a Letter from a Tory Member of Parliament to his Friend in the Country.*" In this masterly defence, he fully justifies himself, and appeals to evidence, taken upon oath, from the two principal charges, high breach of trust, and notorious corruption. In regard to high

Chapter 6.
1711 to 1713.

Expelled the house.

Committed to the Tower.

Visited by persons of distinction.

Publishes his defence.

* 1st. 155 against 207. 2d. 148—205. 3d. 156—168. 4th. 148—170. The motion of censure against the duke of Marlborough was carried by a much greater majority, 270 against 165.—Journals.

† Journals.—Chandler's Debates.

‡ Journals.—Chandler's Debates.

§ Life of the Duke of Shrewsbury.—Annals of Queen Anne, for 1712, p. 140.—Conduct of Mr. Walpole.—Answer to a scurrilous Libel.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

breach of trust, he shews that he had no advantage in the contracts; that he was not the only person concerned in making them, and that they were settled on the best and most advantageous terms to be obtained at the time; in reply to the charge of notorious corruption, he proves that a share in the contract being given to his friend, Robert Mann, the contractors preferred paying him a sum of money in recompence for giving up his share; that the contractor, who had negotiated this bargain with Mann, dying, the other not knowing his name, made the note of hand payable to Walpole or order, for the use of his friend; that the note was endorsed by himself only for form, and the money received by Mann was for his own use and benefit, and that Walpole had not the least interest, directly or indirectly, in this affair.

I have been thus particular in stating the defence of Walpole, because it gives strong proofs of his innocence, and was never fairly and candidly answered; because some of the very persons who visited him in prison, and not only defended but applauded his conduct in this instance, afterwards, when in opposition, reproached him with the commission of this very crime, of which they had publicly and formally absolved him; and because some late * writers, of different principles, have stigmatised his memory, without having sufficiently examined his defence †.

This imprisonment has been called the prelude to his rise; and lord Lansdowne, who was afterwards consigned to the same apartment, wrote these lines under Walpole's name, which he had left on the window:

Good unexpected, evil unforeseen,
Appear by turns, as fortune shifts the scene;
Some rais'd aloft, come tumbling down again,
And fall so hard, they bound and rise again ‡.

Eastcourt's
ballad.

A popular ballad, composed by Eastcourt the player, in honour of Wal-

* See Smollet, vol. 2. p. 209. Macpherson's History, vol. 2. p. 537.

† For the investigation of this inquiry, in which the honour and character of Sir Robert Walpole is involved, I have consulted and compared the Journals of the House of Commons, Proceedings in Parliament, Burnet, Tindal, Oldmixon, Case of Mr. Walpole, Conduct of Robert Walpole, esquire, and An Answer to the Character and Conduct of Robert Walpole, esquire, with an exact account

of his popularity, published in 1717. In this last publication, the author endeavours to refute Walpole's defence of himself, and to shew that the money paid to Mann was for Walpole himself, but as all his accusations amount to mere assertions and conjectures, without the smallest evidence of the fact, it is only here mentioned as a proof that I have not examined only one side of the question.

‡ Walpole's Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, V. II. p. 128. Lansdowne's Poems.

pole,

pole, during his imprisonment, proves the high esteem in which he was then held by his party, and predicted, with a true prophetic spirit, his future greatness.

Chapter 6.

1711 to 1713.

On the Jewel in the Tower.

1.

If what the Tower of London holds
Is valu'd for more than its power;
Then counting what it now enfolds,
How wondrous rich is the same *Tower*.

2.

I think not of the armory,
Nor of the guns and lion's roar,
Nor yet the valu'd library,
I mean the Jewel in the *Tower*.

3.

This jewel late adorn'd the court,
With excellence unknown before;
But now being blown upon in sport,
This Jewel's case is now the *Tower*.

4.

State lapidaries there have been,
To weigh and prove and look it o'er;
The very fashion's worth being seen,
Th' intrinsic, more than is the *Tower*.

5.

'Tis not St. George's diamond,
Nor any of his partner's store;
It never yet to such belong'd,
Which sent this Jewel to the *Tower*.

6.

With thousand methods they did try it,
Whose firmness strengthen'd ev'ry hour;
They were not able all to buy it,
And so they sent it to the *Tower*.

They

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

7.
They would have prov'd it counterfeit,
That it was right 'twas truly swore;
But oaths, nor words, cou'd nothing get,
And so they sent it to the *Tower*.

8.
It's brilliant brightness who can doubt,
By Marlborough it was sometimes wore;
They turn'd the mighty master out,
Who turn'd this jewel into the *Tower*.

9.
These are the marks upon it found,
King William's crest it bears before,
And liberty's engraven round,
Though now confin'd within the *Tower*.

10.
Nor France in it an interest has,
Nor Spain with all its golden ore;
For to the queen and high allies,
Belongs this Jewel in the *Tower*.

11.
The owners modestly reserv'd
It in a decent Norfolk bower,
And scarce yet think it has deserv'd
The Cæsar's honour of the *Tower*.

12.
The day shall come to make amends,
This jewel shall with pride be wore,
And o'er his foes, and with his friends,
Shine glorious bright out of the *Tower*.

Lady Walpole*, who had a pleasing voice, used to sing this ballad with great spirit and effect, and was particularly fond of dwelling on the last verse, at the time when the prophecy was fulfilled; when the prisoner

"O'er his foes, and with his friends,
Shone glorious bright out of the *Tower*."

* From Lord Orford.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH:

1712—1714.

Released from his Imprisonment.—Exertions in Favour of his Party.—Publishes various political Pieces.—Eulogium of him, by Godolphin.—Publishes the History of the late Parliament.—Re-elected for Lynn.—Speaks against the Peace; the Treaty of Commerce; and the Schism Bill:—In favour of Sir Richard Steele, for printing the Crisis and the Englishman.

THE ministry having protracted the session by adjournment *, instead of ending it by prorogation, merely to detain him in prison, Walpole was not released until the 8th of July. From that period till the dissolution, which took place on the 8th of August 1713, being incapacitated from serving his party in the house of commons, he exerted himself in maintaining the union of the Whigs, in conciliating the leaders, often discordant in their opinions, jealous of each other, or lukewarm in their conduct. He was a principal director of their counsels, and the great manager of their deliberations. The magnanimity and cheerfulness with which he acted and suffered, his liberality in expending large sums in procuring intelligence, and promoting the Protestant succession, the hospitality with which he entertained his political associates, endeared him to the party, animated their counsels, and contributed to preserve them from defection. The heavy expences incurred by these means, injured his private fortune, and involved him in pecuniary embarrassments; a circumstance which perhaps gave rise to, or at least sanctioned the report, afterwards industriously circulated by opposition, of his being a needy adventurer, who had not credit enough to raise an hundred pounds on his own security †. The gratitude he afterwards displayed to those persons who accommodated him with money at a considerable risk, does honour to his character.

During this period, he ably employed his pen in the service of his party. He assisted Steele in several political pamphlets ‡; and published an answer

1712.

June 21.

Released.

Political publications.

* Journals.—History of his Administration, p. 16.

† Pulteney's Reply to Sedition and Defa-

VOL. I.

mation Displayed, p. 8.—An Answer to one Part of an Infamous Libel, &c. p. 34.

‡ Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2. p. 511.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

September
1712.

Publishes the
History of
the last Par-
liament.

to the vote of the house of commons, that the states general had been deficient in their proportion of troops, and that the queen had paid subsidies to the amount of three millions of crowns above the sum stipulated.

His zeal and exertions were so conspicuous, that he received a flattering testimony of esteem, in a visit which he paid to Godolphin, while confined with his last illness at St. Alban's, in the house of the dutchess of Marlborough. The dying statesman turning to the dutchess, who stood by his bedside, said to her, "If you ever forsake that young man, and if souls are permitted to return from the grave to the earth, I will appear to you and reproach you for your conduct *."

The dissolution of the parliament at length taking place, Walpole's incapacity was removed, and he was again chosen for Lynn. While the elections were depending, it was the opinion of Somers, and the Whig lords, that to state to the people, in a strong and perspicuous manner, the proceedings of the late parliament, with a view to expose the measures of the ministry, and to guide the electors in the choice of the new representatives, would be highly advantageous to their party. As no one seemed better calculated for this office than Walpole, he undertook a pamphlet, at their desire, on the Thursday, and published it on the Tuesday following †, under the Title of, A Short History of the Parliament, with the motto :

Venalis Populus, venalis Curia Patrum.

To this publication is prefixed, a dedication by Pulteney, then his coadjutor, composed in a strain of irony and humour peculiarly his own, and in which, though addressed to an anonymous peer, it was easy to perceive that the earl of Oxford was the object of allusion.

The pamphlet tends to prove, that the proceedings of the parliament had been directly contrary to the honour and advantage of England. The author defends the measures of the late administration with great ability; and after refuting the censures passed on Marlborough and Townshend, instances his own case, and describes himself as sharing the honour of an impeachment with those illustrious men. His animadversions on the conduct of the parliament, were made with so much freedom and asperity, that it was not deemed prudent to entrust them to a common printer. Walpole himself, at a subsequent period, expresses the apprehensions of the danger he might have incurred, had the author been discovered. "There is a noble lord

* From the late earl of Orford.

† Article, Earl of Orford, in Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, in which many of his other pamphlets are enumerated.

in the other house, who can, if he pleases, inform gentlemen, that the author of that history was so apprehensive of the consequences of printing it, that the press was carried to his house, and the copies printed there *."

Chapter 7.

1713 to 1714.

In the new parliament, which met on the 16th of February, Walpole, deriving fresh lustre from his late temporary eclipse, distinguished himself with more than usual ability. He warmly opposed the peace; the foundation of the South Sea company; the treaty of commerce with France; the schism bill: and in all these instances he proved his consummate knowledge and experience in affairs of the most complicated nature, and greatly embarrassed the speakers on the side of government.

1714.

He was also particularly active in defence of Steele, who had rendered himself obnoxious to the ministers by his bold writings on the side of the Whigs, and was accused by auditor Foley, sir William Wyndham, and the Tories, of having published the Englishman and the Crisis. The rage of party was so violent on this occasion, that an attempt was made to compel Steele to withdraw, without entering into his own defence, but this unjust proposition was over-ruled without a division, though it occasioned a debate of some length, in which Walpole took an active part. The motion, that he should be permitted to make his defence to the imputed libel, paragraph by paragraph, was, however, determined against him. He then entered on his defence, with a temper, modesty, and eloquence quite unusual to him, and continued speaking three hours. After he had withdrawn, no member on the side of the ministry attempted to answer him; and auditor Foley only observed, that without amusing the house with long speeches, it was plain to every body, that the writings complained of, were seditious and scandalous, injurious to her majesty's government, the church, and the universities; and moved for the question. This motion occasioned a warm debate, in which Walpole bore the most active and principal share. Among other bold animadversions, he observed, That this violent prosecution struck at the liberties of the subject in general, and of the members of that house in particular; justified Mr. Steele on all the heads of the accusation raised against him; and said, he hoped the house would not sacrifice one of their members to the resentment and rage of the ministry, for no other crime than his exposing their mismanagements, and, like a good patriot, warning his countrymen against the imminent dangers with which the nation in general, and in particular her majesty's sacred person were threatened, by the visible encouragement that was given to the Pretender's friends. In this defence,

Defence of
Steele.

March 18.

* Chandler's Debates, April 13, 1738.—Probably the peer alluded to was lord Cobham.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

Walpole asked the house, "Why the author was answerable in parliament for the things which he wrote in his private capacity? And if he is punishable by law, why is he not left to the law? By this mode of proceeding, parliament, which used to be the scourge only of evil ministers, is made by ministers the scourge of the subject. The ministers, he added, are sufficiently armed with authority; they possess the great sanction of rewards and punishments, the disposal of the privy purse, the grace of pardoning, and the power of condemning to the pillory for seditious writings; powers consistent with, and naturally arising from their exalted situation, and which they cannot too jealously guard from being perverted to answer indirect or criminal purposes. In former reigns, the audacity of corruption extended itself only to judges and juries; the attempt so to degrade parliament was, till the present period, unheard of. The liberty of the press is unrestrained; how then shall a part of the legislature dare to punish that as a crime which is not declared to be so by any law, framed by the whole? And why should that house be made the instrument of such a detestable purpose; that house, which had to boast the honourable distinction of being applied to, as the source of redress, in all cases of oppression. Steele, he observed, has advanced nothing which bears a direct criminal construction; nothing which can be construed into guilt without the assistance of forced inuendoes; and shall parliament assume the ungracious part of thus inferring guilt from mere arbitrary construction? If they do, what advantage to government or the community can be expected to result from such a measure? Are doctrines refuted, and truths suppressed, by being censured or stigmatized?—In the reign of James, it was criminal to say, that the king was a Papist; but the severity of the law, or the cruelty of its ministers could not eradicate from the mind of a single individual, the confirmed belief of the fact. Steele is only attacked, because he is the advocate for the Protestant succession; the cause which he so ably defends, gives the offence; through his sides the succession is to be wounded; his punishment will be a symptom, that the succession is in danger; and the ministry are now feeling the pulse of parliament, to see how far they may be able to proceed. Does Mr. Steele, he inquired, incur any blame for writing against Popery? In the reign of James, indeed, preaching against Popery was considered as casting a reflection on the ministry. But it was not so in the reign of king William. From what fatality does it arise, that what is written in favour of the Protestant succession, and was countenanced by the late ministry, is deemed a libel on the present administration? General invectives in the pulpit against drinking, fornication, or any particular vice, have never been esteemed a reflection on particular persons, unless these per-

sons are guilty of the darling sin against which the preacher inveighs. It becomes, then, a fair inference, from their irritability and resentment against its defender, that the darling sin of the present administration is to obstruct the Protestant succession. If a Papist, nay an Irish Papist, who for many years has been a servant to the late king James, and the Pretender, (meaning Sir Patrick Lawless) one who has borne arms against her majesty in France and Spain; one who is strongly suspected of having embued his hands in the blood of the late duke of Medina Celi, and marquis of Leganez; if such a man be not only permitted to come into England, but to appear at court, in the presence-chamber; if he be caressed by the ministers; nay, I speak it with horror, if such a man be admitted into her majesty's private audience, in her closet, will not every good subject think her person in danger? And is it then a crime in Mr. Steele to shew his concern for so precious a life *."

The ministers, however, carried their point; the Crisis and Englishman were voted seditious libels, and Steele was expelled the house †.

The speech of Walpole on this occasion procured him great applause; but the public did not know, that the defence made by Steele himself, was in a great degree the offspring of his eloquence; a fact related by bishop Newton, on the authority of Pulteney ‡. "When Steele was to be expelled the house of commons, Mr. Walpole and Mr. Pulteney, and Mr. Addison, were commissioned to go to him, by the noblemen and members of the Kit Kat Club, with their positive order and determination, that Steele should not make his own speech, but Addison should make it for him, and he should recite it from the other's writing, without any insertion or addition of his own. Addison thought this an hard injunction, and said, that he must be like a school-boy, and desire the gentlemen to give him a little sense. Walpole said, that it was impossible to speak a speech in cold blood; but being pressed, he said he would try, and immediately spoke a very good speech of what he thought proper for Steele to say on the occasion; and the next day in the house made another speech as good, or better, on the same subject; but so totally different from the former, that there was scarce a single argument or thought the same; which particulars are mentioned as illustrious proofs of his uncommon eloquence."

* The principal part of this speech is taken from memorandums, in the hand writing of Sir Robert Walpole: Orford Papers.—Chandler.

† Steele afterwards published, "An Apology for himself and his Writings occasioned

by his Expulsion from the House of Commons," which, with a becoming gratitude, he dedicated to Walpole.

‡ Life of Bishop Newton, by himself.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH:

1714.

Zeal of Walpole for the Hanover Succession.—Justification of his Conduct, on the Presumption that the Protestant Succession was in Danger.—Public Alarms and Apprehensions.—Death of Queen Anne.

1714.

Declares the
Protestant
succession in
danger.

THE great question, in which Walpole appears to have always exerted himself with unabated zeal, was on the state of the nation with regard to the danger of the Protestant succession. In the course of this debate, Bromley, secretary of state, having attempted to prove the negative, by representing the endeavours of the queen to secure that object, and to remove the Pretender from Loraine; Walpole, with great spirit and warmth, avowed his opinion, that although the queen herself afforded no cause of apprehension, yet much was to be dreaded from the dubious conduct of some persons, and therefore insisted that her name should not be introduced.

The zeal of Walpole on this subject, was by no means adopted from a spirit of opposition, and was not a sudden spark struck out by the circumstances of the moment: it was a leading principle which had regulated his political conduct from his first entrance into life; it had been instilled into him by education, and matured by reason and reflection, to which he uniformly adhered in all situations and under all circumstances.

Examination
of his mo-
tives.

If his object in spreading these alarms was to distress government, and to excite tumults against the ministers, he acted a false and wicked part; but if he really had reason for his suspicions, he must be justified by every principle of attachment to the religion and constitution of the country. He can only be fully vindicated from the conviction, that it was the secret wish and resolution of the queen to exclude the Hanover family, and to restore the Pretender, and that the ministers were disposed to co-operate with her inclinations. At the period of which we are now speaking, the strongest suspicions were entertained, that such a scheme was in agitation, and those suspicions have been since verified by the most authentic documents.

Intrigues in
favour of the
Pretender.

It was natural to suppose, that as the queen had no surviving issue, her affection for her brother, of whose legitimacy she appears never to have entertained a doubt, would supersede her inclination to a foreign family. She had often declared that she did not consider the crown as her right, and the impressions of conscience

conscience naturally led her to atone for the wrongfulness of her possession, by permitting it to resume its ancient course of descent. In these ideas, she was encouraged by her favorite, Mrs. Masham; and when, by the intrigues of that artful woman, the chief impediment to her projects, the ascendancy of the Whig party, was removed, she entertained them with less reserve, and employed herself assiduously to give them effect. Harley, who had succeeded in dividing the Whigs, so as to prevent their exerting their whole united force in a consistent opposition, yet found he could not carry on the government, and make a peace, without the assistance of the Jacobites: a direct communication was opened between the court of St. Germain's, and that of London; the Pretender addressed a pathetic letter * to the queen, urging his own right to the crown, in which every soothing effort of supplication and submission was employed, and every appeal made to family pride, to tenderness, and justice, which could be supposed to influence a mind naturally benevolent and just, and which was beginning, through lassitude and perplexity, to seek some repose from the multiplied cares of a stormy government. Under these sinister auspices, the peace of Utrecht was made; a peace which confounded the characters of victors and vanquished, and in which the grand objects of the war were completely relinquished. The interests of the Pretender were kept in view, rather than those of the country, and the queen was anxious that the French king should not be deprived of the power of affording him effectual assistance.

The establishment of the Protestant religion was the only motive which could counteract the bias of the queen's mind in favour of her brother. The influence of that consideration was much diminished by her dislike to the family destined to succeed her; a prejudice which induced her to resist all approach of them to her person, and to oppose the applications of the electress Sophia, for a writ to call up the electoral prince to the house of peers; as a prejudice so well known to those who possessed her confidence, that Mrs. Masham made no scruple to declare to the French minister, whom Louis the Fourteenth sent to treat for peace, that the Hanover family *was all their aversion* *, and that it was the wish of the queen, that matters should be so arranged that justice might at some time take place. Those who favoured the cause of the Pretender, were so anxious to avail themselves of these favourable appearances, that they advised him, either in shew, or in fact, to renounce his religion, to withdraw himself from the protection of the French king, to marry a Protestant, and reside in Sweden. Matters were carried so far, that some

* Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

The Whigs
apprized of
these in-
trigues.

Arguments
of the other
party.

of his sanguine partisans advised him to come to Scotland, and others even projected a plan for his being presented by the queen to the parliament, and publicly acknowledged as her successor*. Meetings were also held, both in town and country, to promote the repeal of the act of settlement, and to vest in the queen the power of nominating a successor. These schemes were directly over-ruled, or indirectly counteracted by Harley, who, notwithstanding his junction with the Jacobites, for the sole purpose of making a peace, and maintaining his ground against the Whigs, does not appear ever to have wished to frustrate the provisions of the act of settlement. His conduct at length made such an impression on that party, that through their intrigues he was dismissed from administration, on a suspicion of lukewarmness or duplicity, and Bolingbroke, who was supposed to be more implicitly devoted to their interests, was recommended as his successor by the duke of Berwick, natural son of James the Second, and the Pretender's agent with the disaffected in England.

These intrigues were too public and notorious to escape the knowledge of the friends to the Protestant succession; Sir Robert Walpole †, in the latter period of his life, frequently declared that the leaders of the Whigs were fully apprized of them, and that he, in particular, drew his information from two persons who were present at a meeting in the country between the chiefs of the ministry and the leading men of both houses. Their deliberations turned on the manner of invalidating or repealing the act of succession. An actual repeal, and a positive declaration of the Pretender's right, was moved by some: it was recommended by others, to leave to the queen a full power to nominate her successor by will.

Those who treat the danger of the Protestant succession as chimerical, observe in reply to these inferences, that from the time of the Revolution, many of the ministers had corresponded with the Pretender and his family; some of them with the connivance of the sovereign on the throne, and probably with a view of discovering the schemes of the Jacobites. On similar principles it may be conjectured, that Bolingbroke ‡ and Ormond might also have caballed with Berwick and the agents of the Pretender, with a view only of obtaining the dismissal of Oxford, and the support of the Jacobites; and might, as soon as they had secured themselves in their places, have followed the example of Oxford. In corroboration of this argument, it appears from a letter of Erasmus Lewis to Swift §, that Bolingbroke, at this period, courted

* See Memoires de Berwick.

† Etough's Minutes of a Conference with
Horace Walpole, at Putney, August 6 and 20,
1752.

‡ See Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2. p. 529

§ Swift's Letters, vol. 1. Letter 150.

the principal leaders of the Whigs, and Walpole * himself admitted that Bolingbroke had held a meeting with them for the purpose of arranging the terms of a coalition, at which he gave the most positive assurances of his good wishes to the Protestant succession; but when it was insisted, that as a proof of his sincerity, the Pretender should be removed to such a distance as would prevent his interference in the affairs of England, the minister declared his inability to obtain the consent of the queen, to what she deemed the banishment of her brother. To attempt to fathom the politics, and unquestionably trace the designs of the artful and unprincipled Bolingbroke, would be difficult, even at this time, when party prejudices have subsided, and when many lights have been thrown on his conduct. But at the period here alluded to, the task was impracticable. How could the Whigs discriminate whether his intrigues with Marlborough, and his attempts to open a negotiation with some of their leaders, were intended merely to counteract the designs of Oxford, or to deceive them; or whether his correspondence with Berwick and the Pretender, was carried on with the view to promote or frustrate their schemes?

But such conjectures do not strictly apply to the question in agitation, Whether intrigues were not employed to set aside the Hanover line, and to induce the queen to assist in placing the Pretender on the throne? That simple fact is incontrovertible, and affords a justification of the Whigs, and of those Tories who were friends to the Hanover line, that having knowledge of such cabals, or even entertaining strong presumptions of them, they should use every means to defeat those attempts. They were bound in duty to propose such strong measures as would awaken the Protestants to a sense of their danger, and force the queen and ministry to consent to such acts, as were most likely to secure the succession; and they were to come forwards repeatedly and continually, that the passions of men might not be suffered to sleep, and that the danger might be made manifest to the discernment of the public. They are therefore sufficiently vindicated for setting a price on the Pretender's head; for consulting with the agents of Hanover; for advising Baron Schutz to demand the writ for the electoral prince to be called to the house of peers, and for insisting that he should be permitted to reside in London, although Oxford told the duke of Kent, that to bring over one of the electoral family, would be to bring the queen's coffin to her view. Here then is an ample justification of the Whigs, and of Walpole their zealous partisan, for so decisively

Refuted.

Friends of
the succeſſion vindicated.

* Etouff's minutes of a conference with Sir R. Walpole.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

Alarming
state of af-
fairs.

endeavouring to counteract, in every legal manner, the designs of the queen and the Jacobites.

The last six months of the reign of Anne, was a fearful period; big with alarms, during which the kingdom stood on the "*perilous edge*" of domestic commotions and foreign invasion. The nation was divided into three parties, each differently interested in regard to the succession of the Hanover line. The Jacobites, hostile and exulting; the Tories, disaffected, neutral, or lukewarm; the Whigs, always active, yet occasionally desponding, anxious to avoid a civil war, yet determined to hazard their lives and fortunes in support of their religion and constitution; and it is impossible to read the Stuart and Hanover Papers, in Macpherson's Collection for 1714, and the Memoirs of Berwick, and of the duke of Hamilton, without shuddering at the dangers which seemed likely to burst forth from the violence of those parties, and the collision of discordant opinions.

The earl of Chesterfield † was firmly convinced, that if the queen had lived three months longer, the religion and liberties of this country would have been in imminent danger. The patience of the Whigs was nearly exhausted; their apprehensions increased, and induced them to form associations for the protection of their religion and liberties; the people caught the alarm; many of the Tories began to see the danger, and to act in conjunction with the Whigs for the general security.

Death of
Queen Anne.

At this important crisis, the queen was seized with a sudden stroke of apoplexy, which took away her senses, and soon occasioned her death. Although she had dismissed Oxford, she had not yet nominated his successor; and while Bolingbroke and his party were wavering, the dukes of Argyle and Somerset entered the council chamber without being summoned, and moved for an examination of the physicians. The queen being pronounced in great danger, they represented that it was necessary to fill up the place of lord treasurer, and the duke of Shrewsbury was proposed. The whole board assenting, the queen, during a lucid interval, delivered to him the white staff. The privy counsellors being summoned, Somers, and other friends to the Protestant succession, made their appearance ‡; and every precaution was taken to quiet the public mind, and to ensure the accession of the elector of Hanover. Anne expired on the first of August 1714; and Bolingbroke expresses himself in a § letter to Swift, dated August 3; "The earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday; the queen died on Sunday. What a world is this, and how does fortune banter us!"

* Milton.

† Life of Lord Chesterfield, p. 13.—Letter to Mr. Jumeau.

‡ Tindal.

§ Swift's Letters, vol. 1. p. 507.

PERIOD THE SECOND:

From the Accession of GEORGE the First, to the Commencement
of the South Sea Scheme:

1714—1720.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

*General State of the European Powers at the Death of Queen Anne, with respect
to their Inclination or Capacity to promote or obstruct the Accession of George the
First.—State of Great Britain.—Character of George the First—not calculated
to promote his Cause.*

NO prince ever ascended a throne under more critical circumstances, and
with less appearance of a quiet reign, than George the First; whether
we consider the state of the European powers, the situation of parties in Great
Britain, or his own character.

Most of the European powers were at this critical juncture, from motives
of prejudice, alliance, or personal dislike, averse to the interests of the elector
of Hanover; and those who had not taken a decided part against him, with
the exception of Prussia and Holland alone, were indifferent, or incapable of
shewing their friendship.

Although Louis the Fourteenth had guaranteed, at the peace of Utrecht,
the right of the house of Hanover to succeed to the crown of Great Britain,
and on the demise of Anne had acknowledged George the First, yet it
was well known that his attachment to the Roman Catholic religion,
his jealousy of England, and a spirit of magnanimity which he greatly affect-
ed, would lead him to assist, if possible, the unfortunate prince, whom
he had once publicly received as the lawful successor of James the Se-
cond. Though too much exhausted by the late war, to follow his inclina-
tions by any active interference, he connived at the preparations making by

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

State of
Europe.

France.

Period II.
1714 to 1740.

the Pretender within his dominions; and should any domestic insurrections take place, so as to give hopes of success, he was ready to pour in the whole force of France to promote a restoration.

Spain.

Spain, at this period, was little more than a province of France, and her sovereign Philip the Fifth acted in perfect subordination to the will of his grandfather Louis the Fourteenth, to whose assistance he was principally indebted for the crown. He nourished a violent antipathy to the elector of Hanover, and though prudence and necessity induced him to acknowledge him king of Great Britain, yet his principles and wishes inclined him to favour the Stuarts.

Portugal.

John the Fifth reigned in Portugal, a prince who possessed greater talents and activity than any of the sovereigns of the line of Braganza. But he was already involved in a war with Spain, and though he had some confidence in the promises of assistance from George, yet he depended more on the mediation of France, and was, of course, liable to be biassed by the cabinet of Versailles.

The Emperor.

The emperor Charles the Sixth, the head of the house of Austria, disappointed as well as incensed at the manner in which the peace of Utrecht had been concluded, maintained a gloomy reserve with respect to the affairs of England, and might fairly be supposed rather inimical than otherwise to the interests of George, whose growing influence in Germany, he watched with a jealous circumspection. He well knew that the party in England, which favoured the accession of the house of Brunswick, was extremely weak, and believed that the Elector himself was indifferent to his elevation, and on these accounts he was unwilling to offend his competitor by too great an opposition to his interest*. In consequence of these motives, he refused†, at the peace at Rastadt, to guaranty the succession of the family of George the First to the crown of Great Britain.

Prussia.

The most powerful among the German princes was Frederic William king of Prussia, who was included in the entail of the act of settlement, and who had espoused Sophia Dorothea, the daughter of George the First. Upon the first news of Anne's illness, he repaired to Hanover, and assured his father-in-law, the elector, that he would assist him with all his forces to maintain his title to the British throne. But the Prussian monarch had not yet established, on a firm basis, his great system of military tactics, and his whole force could only tend to preserve the electorate of Hanover, but could

* Macpherson's State Papers, vol. 2. p. 638.

† Lord Townshend to Count Starenberg Goerde, October 24, 1725.

not afford any effectual assistance to the king of Great Britain in resisting external enemies, or curbing internal opposition.

The United Provinces, enfeebled by exertions above their strength, bending under a vast load of debt, considering themselves shamefully deserted by England, and unwilling to contract new engagements which might again expose them to fresh dangers and new debts, yet were the only state who acted with sincerity and spirit. Conscious that the restoration of the Pretender would be followed by a strict union between France and England, which might prove destructive to their interests, they promoted, to the utmost of their power, the accession of George the First, and received him, as he passed through their country to take possession of his throne, with every demonstration of respect and affection.

Russia was just emerging from Asiatic indolence and barbarity, and rising into importance under the amazing efforts of Peter the Great, who already entertained those jealousies against George the First, which afterwards nearly broke out into open hostilities. But at present he was engaged in a war with Sweden and Turkey; and was not in a situation either to obstruct or assist the accession.

Sweden, involved in a destructive war with Russia, Denmark, and Poland, in which she had lost her fairest provinces, and seen her veteran soldiers either exterminated or taken prisoners, was no longer in that proud situation which enabled her to give law to the north. Irritated against George the First for the claims which he had begun to make on Bremen and Verden, Charles the Twelfth would have opposed his accession, if his circumstances and situation had permitted. But he was at this critical moment resident in Turkey, uselessly displaying those instances of romantic bravery and inflexible obstinacy, which characterised rather the leader of a savage horde of Tartars, than a sovereign of a great and civilized people.

Denmark, under the wise administration of Frederic the Fourth, was just beginning to recover from the deep wounds inflicted by a long war with Sweden, which still continued; her commerce languishing, and the resources of the state almost exhausted. The king might consider the accession of his ally, who had long aspired to share the spoils of Sweden, a fortunate occurrence. But Denmark was more likely to derive assistance from George, than George to receive any effectual succour from Denmark. Frederic was at the best but a passive friend, and only in a situation to defend his own territories and conquests, and not to act offensively in his favour.

Poland, under the feeble domination of an elective monarch, was declining fast in the political scale of Europe. Augustus the Second was almost a cypher, totally governed by Peter the Great, to whom he owed his re-establishment,

Chapter 9.

1714.

Holland.

Russia.

Sweden.

Denmark.

Poland.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Italy.

The Pope.

blishment, and in no respect sufficiently considerable to affect the succession in England.

The small sovereignties, and petty republics of Italy, were of little consideration.

The Pope, no longer a great temporal prince, took no active share in the general affairs of Europe. Innocent the Thirteenth, however inclined to favour the Pretender, possessed neither influence or strength sufficient to obstruct the succession of the Protestant line; he could only offer an asylum to a prince, whose father had sacrificed his crown to his religion; and who, after being driven from place to place as an outcast from society, thought himself fortunate in being permitted to hide his proscribed head within the capital of the ecclesiastical dominions.

Savoy and
Piedmont.

Savoy and Piedmont, from their critical situation between France and the Milanese, and from the transcendent talents and military skill of several sovereigns, particularly Emanuel Philibert, and Charles Emanuel the First, had risen from a petty principality into consequence. Victor Amadeus, the reigning prince, no less ambitious and enterprising than his great predecessors, had followed their policy, in selling himself to those who bid the highest for his assistance and alliance, and in making gradually small acquisitions, which increased his strength, without giving umbrage to his neighbours, acting in conformity to a proverb, which he is said to have applied to the Milanese: "I must acquire the Milanese province by province, as I eat the leaves of an artichoke."

Of all the European sovereigns who had acceded to the grand alliance, Victor Amadeus alone had reason to be contented with the measures of the British cabinet. Anne had zealously exerted herself in his favour, and obtained for him, at the peace of Utrecht, the kingdom of Sicily; that part of the duchies of Montferrat and Milan, by the cession of which Leopold had detached him from France, and the guaranty of the succession to the crown of Spain, on the failure of the male line of Philip the Fifth. Yet these important advantages had not satisfied the aspiring views of Victor Amadeus. His consort, Anna Maria, grand-daughter of Charles the First of England, and the next in succession after the children of James the Second, had protested against the act of settlement, as contrary to her right by hereditary descent; and he considered the elector of Hanover as usurping a crown which belonged to his son. He, therefore, looked with an evil eye on the peaceful accession of George the First, and with that versatility of politics that marked his character, was already meditating a return to his old alliance with France, which he afterwards effected.

†

Such

Such was the general situation of Europe at the death of queen Anne; George had more enemies than friends, and his sole dependance was placed on the spirit and vigour of his partisans in England; but the state of this country was not such as to augur success.

The reigns of his two immediate predecessors had been stormy, distracted with factions, and opened a gloomy prospect of a new reign, under a foreign sovereign. The contending political parties, exasperated by long opposition, and all the injuries attending alternate elevation and depression, expressed their rancour in mutual accusation and virulent reproach.

State of parties.

The Tories, who, though extremely powerful, both in respect of numbers and property, were censurable for their arrogance, in pronouncing themselves, exclusively, the landholders and proprietors of the kingdom, reviled their opponents as a faction which leaned for support on the enemies of the church and monarchy, and on the bank, and monied interest, which was as they said raised by usury, and founded on corruption.

The Whigs retaliated by charging the Tories, who formed the bulk of the nation, and included most of the country gentlemen and parochial clergy, with an attachment to the French, and hatred of the Dutch; with all the crimes with which they loaded the framers of the peace of Utrecht, and with favouring the interests of Louis the Fourteenth, because he supported their idol the Pretender. It is a great injustice however, to confound, as they did, the characters of the Tories and Jacobites; for although many of the Tories had, from motives of pique or disappointed ambition, as well as from affection, corresponded with the court of St. Germain, yet it did not follow that they all uniformly entertained the scheme of restoring the dethroned family: Yet the inculpation was not divested of all shew of truth; the general principles of the Tories tended strongly to enforce passive obedience and non-resistance, and as they disapproved the doctrines which occasioned the revolution, censured by implication the Protestant succession. The Jacobites too, disappointed in their towering hopes, favoured this popular misapprehension, by endeavouring to connect the cause and opinions of the Tories with their own. The strong feature of distinction between the Whigs and Tories was, that the Tories were willing to have assented to the resumption of the crown by the Pretender, if he would have embraced the Protestant persuasion; while the Whigs, armed with just diffidence and distrust, and considering the political principles in which he had been educated, no less hostile to their liberties, than his faith was to their religious persuasion, would admit of no compromise, nor on any terms agree to his restoration.

The

Period II.

1714 to 1720.

The Tories were reinforced by the Jacobites, who possessed great credit abroad, and influence at home; who had acquired an unlimited ascendancy in the Clans of Scotland, full of resentment at the act of union, which destroyed their independence; and amongst the Papists of Ireland, who formed the bulk of that kingdom, and were attached to their cause by every tie of religious consideration. The Whigs, to balance the influence of the Jacobites and Catholics, had the assistance of the whole body of Dissenters, who, irritated at the severity of the schism bill, passed under the influence of the Tories, hoped, from a Protestant monarch, and a Whig administration, a repeal of that law.

The Whigs now raised themselves from the despondency into which they had been thrown by the measures of the four last years of the queen, and hailed the new reign as the commencement of their triumph. The Tories, divided and irresolute, concealed their chagrin in a shew of submission, while they meditated new manœuvres for the attainment of power; and the Jacobites, precipitated from the exultation of hope too fondly indulged, submitted for the present, but resolved to embrace the first opportunity of breaking into open rebellion.

Character of
George the
First.

George the First, who, by the death of his mother, the electress Sophia*, succeeded to the throne of Great Britain, in virtue of the act of Settlement, was ill calculated by nature, disposition, and habit, to reconcile these jarring parties, and remove the unfavourable impressions, which it was natural for all people to entertain of a foreigner, destined to rule over them. He was already fifty-four years of age, and had been long habituated to a court of a different description from that of England, to manners and customs wholly repugnant to those of his new subjects. He was below the middle stature, and his person, though well proportioned, did not impress dignity or respect. His countenance was benign, but without much expression; and his address awkward. He was easy and familiar only in his hours of relaxation, and to those alone who formed his usual society; not fond of attracting notice, phlegmatic and grave in his public deportment, hating the splendour of majesty, shunning crowds, and fatigued even with the first acclamations of the multitude. This natural reserve was heightened by his ignorance of the language, of the first principles of the English constitution, and of the spirit and temper of the people. Without taste for the fine arts, except music, or the smallest inclination for polite literature, men of talents had no reason

* Sophia, grand-daughter of James the First, and widow of Ernest Augustus, elector of Hanover, died the 8th of June, 1714, only two months before queen Anne, in the 84th year of her age.

to expect from his influence, that patronage which had attended them in the preceding reign.

It was currently reported that measures were preparing to evade the laws which excluded foreigners from honours and employments. The example of William was not forgotten, who by his largesses to Bentinck, Zulestein, and Keppel, had given so much umbrage, and George had several mistresses, of whom two the most favoured were expected to accompany him to England, with a numerous train of Hanoverian followers, eager to share the spoils of the *promised land*; to set up a court within a court, and an interest opposite to the true interest of England. It was also maliciously circulated, that he was * indifferent to his own succession, and scarcely willing to stretch out a hand to grasp the crown within his reach; a report which materially lessened his influence in foreign courts, and tended to produce reciprocal indifference in the English. But he had excellent qualities for a sovereign, plainness of manners, simplicity of character, and benignity of temper; great application to business, extreme exactness in distributing his time, the strictest œconomy in regulating his revenue; and, notwithstanding his military skill and tried valour, a love of peace; virtues, however, which required time before they were appreciated, and not of that specious cast to captivate the multitude, or to raise the tide of popularity.

From this representation, it appears that few circumstances concurred to favour his quiet accession; and yet no son ever succeeded his father on the throne, after an uninterrupted succession of a long line of ancestors, with greater tranquillity than George the First. This success was principally owing to the abilities, prudence, activity, and foresight of the great Whigs, and to the precautions which they had always taken, and now took, to promote the succession in the Protestant line, with whom the Hanoverian agents in London concerted their mode of conduct, and to whom the elector of Hanover, from the first news he received of the queen's death, wholly resigned himself and his cause.

* Macpherson, vol. 2. p. 638.

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1714 to 1720.

CHAPTER THE TENTH:

1714.

Proceedings in Parliament on the Death of Queen Anne.—Accession of George the First.—Transactions at Hanover.—Artful Policy of the King, in his Conduct to the Two Parties.—His Arrival in England.—Formation of a Whig Ministry.—Walpole Paymaster of the Forces.—Inveteracy of Parties.

Proceedings
on the death
of the queen.

THE queen had no sooner expired, than the great officers of the realm, in whom the regency bill had vested the executive power, together with certain peers, appointed by the elector of Hanover, in three instruments written by himself, took upon themselves, as lords justices, the administration of affairs till the arrival of the new sovereign, and summoned the privy council.

Proclamation
of king
George.

George was proclaimed king, with the usual solemnities, in the cities of London and Westminster; no disorder was committed, or opposition made, and the earl of Dorset was dispatched to carry to Hanover the news of his inauguration, and to attend him to England. The proclamation took place with equal tranquillity at Edinburgh and Dublin.

August 1.
Meeting of
Parliament.

On the Sunday, when the queen died, the parliament met pursuant to the act which regulated the succession. Sir Thomas Hanmer, the speaker, being absent, Bromley, secretary of state, moved that the house should adjourn to Wednesday; but sir Richard Onslow opposing this motion, from the consideration that time was too precious to be lost at so critical a juncture, proposed, that the house should adjourn only to the following morning, which was carried. The three succeeding days being occupied in taking the oaths, on the 5th the lords justices came to the house of peers, and the chancellor, in their name, made a speech, declaring that they had, in virtue of the act of settlement, and in conjunction with the privy council, proclaimed the elector of Hanover king; and as several branches of the public revenue had expired by the demise of the queen, recommended the house of commons to make such provisions as were requisite to support the dignity and honour of the crown *.

Both houses unanimously agreed to addresses of condolence for the death of queen Anne, and of congratulation on the accession of the king; and

* Journals.

when,

when, in the house of commons, the secretary of state, in moving the address, expatiated on the great loss which the nation had sustained, Walpole seconded the motion, but proposed "to add something more substantial than words, by giving assurances of making good all parliamentary funds;" and Onslow, member for Surry, observed, that the force of the address ought to consist, not in condolence only, but congratulations, and in assuring the king of their firm resolution to support his undoubted title to the crown, and to maintain the public credit. The Whigs acted with extraordinary prudence at this crisis: For when the renewal of the civil list was brought into the lower house, the Tories, under pretence of extraordinary zeal for the new government, proposed one million, which was £.300,000 more than the revenue of the late queen. But the king's friends, apprehensive that the Tories acted insidiously, either with a view to conciliate favour, or for the purpose of reproaching him afterwards, as oppressing the nation by a higher revenue than his predecessor had enjoyed, did not second the motion, and it was dropped. A bill passed, fixing the same sum which had been granted in the last reign, with two additional clauses, moved by Horace Walpole, for the payment of arrears due to the troops of Hanover, and for a reward of £.100,000, from the treasury, to any person apprehending the Pretender, if he should attempt to land in any part of the British dominions.

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1714.

Walpole supports the motion for an address.

The king having returned an answer to the addresses, the lords justices came again to the house of peers on the 23d of August, and the chancellor intimated his majesty's great satisfaction at the loyalty and affection which his subjects had displayed: other loyal addresses were made in reply; the royal assent was given by the lords justices to the money bills, and parliament prorogued to the 23d of September; and thus ended a session, which was conducted with a degree of tranquillity and unanimity long unknown to their proceedings, and seemed to give a happy omen of a quiet and prosperous reign *.

The king's answer to the addresses.

During these transactions, the eyes of Europe and the expectations of England were naturally directed to Hanover. On the 26th of July, the earl of Clarendon, a zealous Tory, who was appointed envoy extraordinary from the queen, had arrived in that capital; but it was not till the 4th of August that he received his first audience at the palace of Herenhausen. At this interview the elector affected to repose the highest confidence in the promises of the queen, expressed a sense of the obligations which his family owed to her, and

Transactions at Hanover.

* Journals.—Political State of Great Britain.—Chandler.—Tindal.

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1714 to 1720.

professed himself unacquainted with the demand made by the electress, of the writ for calling his son to the house of peers *. Craggs, who had been sent with an account of the queen's dangerous illness, arrived there on the 27th, and instantly went to Herenhausen with the letter from the privy council; and on the same night three † other expresses came over, two to the king, and one to Clarendon, with the news of the queen's death. On the receipt of this intelligence, the king summoned his council; and baron Polnitz, who was at Hanover, adds, "many people were pleased to say, that the elector hesitated whether he should accept of the august dignity; but for my part, I fancy that the voyage to England was more the subject of the council's deliberation, than the question whether the crown should be accepted ‡."

When the council was over, he was complimented on his accession; and gave orders to make preparations for his departure, which he judiciously delayed, that he might obtain from England such information as would assist him in the difficult task of forming a new administration, which he managed with great prudence and dexterity.

Prudent conduct of the king.

George had already conducted himself with so much address, that Clarendon does not appear to have entertained the smallest suspicion of any disinclination to the Tories; and Bernsdorf and Goertz, his two principal ministers at Hanover, corresponded respectively with each party. Bernsdorf espoused the Whigs, Goertz the Tories, so that each party entertained hopes of being called into office. The expectations of the Tories were still farther raised by the conduct of Halifax, who, disappointed of the office of lord high treasurer, by the influence of Townshend, proposed the formation of a motley ministry, recommending, among other Tories, Bromley to be chancellor of the exchequer, and Sir Thomas Hanmer one of the tellers. The hope that the king would accede to this, or some other arrangement, and their "dependance on real credit and substantial power under the new government ||," kept the Tories in suspense, and prevented their opposing his establishment. Yet, though the king did not seem averse to their cause, he appears at that very time to have formed, with the advice of Bothmar, his agent in London, an administration entirely of Whigs, but of this he gave no public indication till after his arrival at the Hague, which occasioned a report, that he was not before decided from which party he should select a cabinet. At the Hague, the ascendancy of the Whigs was manifest, by the publication of the appointment of

* Correspondence, period 2d. Clarendon's Letter to Bromley—August 7th.
† Tindal, v. 18, p. 388.

‡ Memoirs of Polnitz: Article Hanover.
|| Bolingbroke's Letter to Sir William Wyndham.

Townshend

Townshend to be secretary of state, with the power of nominating his colleague. In fact, Horace Walpole*, the brother in law and confidential secretary of lord Townshend, by whose recommendation Stanhope was afterwards associated with Townshend as secretary, positively denies that it was ever the king's intention to form a Tory administration.

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1714.

The most agreeable accounts being transmitted by Bothmar, that things wore a favourable appearance, the king continued a fortnight at the Hague, receiving the affectionate congratulations of the states, and the compliments of the foreign ministers, and settling with the Whigs the mode of his future conduct, and the members of the new administration to be appointed on his arrival in England.

At six in the afternoon, on the 18th of September, amidst a large concourse of nobility and gentry, George the First landed at Greenwich. He particularly distinguished the Whig lords, did not pay the smallest attention to Ormond and Harcourt, and only slightly noticed Oxford, who was on the following morning admitted to kiss his hand.

Arrival of
the king.

The appointment of the new administration had been already announced by previous arrangements. The lords of the regency declared Addison their secretary, and ordered all dispatches to be forwarded to him; to the great mortification of Bolingbroke, who was obliged to stand at the door of the council with his papers, without obtaining admittance. On the 28th of August, an express had arrived from Hanover, bearing orders from the king for removing Bolingbroke from his office of secretary of state; the dismissal was attended with evident marks of displeasure from the lords of the regency, Shrewsbury, Somerset, and Cowper taking the seals, and locking the doors of his office; and on the 17th of September, before the king's arrival, Townshend was sworn principal secretary of state in his place. Stanhope was appointed the other secretary; Cowper, lord chancellor; Marlborough, commander in chief; Wharton, privy seal; Sunderland, lord lieutenant of Ireland; Halifax, first lord commissioner of the treasury; Devonshire, lord steward of the household; Orford, first lord commissioner of the admiralty; Somerset, master of the horse; Walpole, paymaster of the forces, and many of his friends provided for in subordinate offices. The principal employments were filled with Whigs; Shrewsbury, who had been the ostensible means of defeating the schemes of Bolingbroke, having resigned the high trusts of lord treasurer, and lord lieutenant of Ireland, was constituted groom of the stole; and the only Tory who was admitted into a high department,

New mini-
stry.

* Letter to Etough, September 21, 1752. Correspondence, Period II.

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and treated with any degree of confidence, was Nottingham, who was declared president of the council. A new privy council was appointed, and a cabinet formed, consisting principally of Marlborough, Nottingham, Sunderland, Halifax, Townshend, Cowper, Stanhope, and Somers, who, on account of his increasing infirmities, was incapable of filling any active department.

The King, or rather Townshend and Walpole, to whom the formation of the new ministry was principally attributed, have been severely censured for excluding the Tories, and confining all places of trust and confidence exclusively to the Whigs, thus making the monarch the leader of a party, instead of sovereign of his people at large.

Inveteracy of
parties.

It may not be improper to remark, that in treating of past events, writers are too apt to form a judgment of things according to principles of theoretical justice or fancied perfection, without considering the temper of the times, or making sufficient allowance for the powerful operation of opinions and prejudices. When we consult contemporary accounts, we find that so great was the inveteracy which subsisted between the Whigs and Tories, that neither would have been content with less than the whole power; and such was the temper of the nation at the time of the king's accession, and the animosity derived from the clash of civil and religious opinions, that it would have been impracticable to form a stable coalition between the two parties. In fact, the scheme of uniting the Whigs and Tories was incompatible; for even so late as 1742, when Pulteney attempted to form his new administration on an extended and liberal principle, he would not venture to introduce many Tories; he declared that the basis of the ministry must be a Whig trunk engrafted with Tory branches; and that gradually the grafts would become more and more numerous and thriving. Nor was it till 1744, when the junction ludicrously called the Broad Bottom was arranged, that the great bodies of Whigs and Tories could be brought heartily to coalesce.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

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CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH:

1714—1716.

Rise and Character of Lord Townshend.—Intimacy with Walpole.—Meeting of the new Parliament.—Walpole takes the Lead.—Draws up the Report of the Secret Committee.—Manages the Impeachment of Bolingbroke—Ormond and Oxford.—Motives for that Conduct.—Rebellion.—His Activity and Services.—Appointed First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer.—Proceedings in Parliament.—Trial and Execution of the Rebels.

CHARLES Viscount Townshend, who now took the lead in the administration, was eldest son of Sir Horatio Townshend, who was so highly instrumental in forwarding the restoration of Charles the Second, that in 1682 he was created a peer. Charles took his seat in the house of peers in 1696, and being of a Tory family, attached himself so strongly to that party, that he signed the protest respecting the impeachment of the Whig lords. But his zeal for the Tories soon abated, and even took a contrary direction, to which the representations and conduct of his friend Walpole greatly contributed. He then attached himself to Somers, and acted so cordially with the Whigs, that when William formed a new administration, principally composed of that party, a rumour was confidentially circulated, that he was appointed privy seal *. In 1706, he was nominated one of the commissioners for settling the union with Scotland; in 1707, captain of the yeomen of the queen's guard, and in 1709, accompanied the duke of Marlborough to Gertruydenberg, as joint plenipotentiary, to open a negotiation for peace with France; he was deputed in the same year ambassador extraordinary to the states general, and concluded with them the barrier treaty. Soon after the change of the Whig administration he resigned his embassy, was removed from his post of captain of the yeomen, and censured by the Tory house of commons for having signed that treaty. During the early part of the reign of queen Anne, on account of his youth, he had acted only a subordinate part, and was not considered as one of the great leaders of the Whig

Character of
lord Townshend.

* Letter from Henry Bland to Robert Walpole, February 3, 1701-2. Orford Papers.

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interest; but towards the close of that reign, his services and decisive conduct raised his consequence; and he gained great accession of character, with his party, on being prosecuted at the same time with the duke of Marlborough.

Though naturally of slow parts, he had acquired from long experience, the talent that rendered him an able man of business, which was the sole object of his ambition; he was rough in manners, impatient of contradiction, of a sanguine disposition, impetuous, and overbearing; though inelegant in language, and often perplexed in argument, yet he spoke sensibly, and with a thorough knowledge of his subject *. He was generous, highly disinterested, of unblemished integrity, and unfulled honour: initiated in diplomatic transactions during the congress at Gertruydenberg and the Hague, he cherished too great an attachment to negotiation, and fond of visionary schemes, was too apt to propose bold and decisive measures, which the more temperate and pacific disposition of Walpole was continually employed in counteracting.

During the two months, which immediately preceded the queen's death, and the interval which ensued between that event and the arrival of the king, he seems to have secured and governed † Bothmar, and the other Hanoverian agents in England; to have supplanted Sunderland and Halifax, and to have obtained the entire confidence of the king, of which he had previously acquired a very distinguished share, by his great reputation for integrity and talents, by the recommendation of pensionary Heinsius, Slingelandt, and other leading men of the Dutch republic, and by his uniform adherence to the cause of the Protestant succession.

Walpole's intimacy with Townshend.

An early and intimate connection had been formed between Townshend and Walpole; they were distantly related, neighbours in the same county, and educated at the same school; they joined the same party, acted under the same leaders, underwent the same persecutions, and co-operated in the same opposition. The marriage which Townshend had contracted with Dorothy Walpole, in 1713, drew closer the bonds of amity, and added an union of blood to the connection of party. Walpole had performed too many essential services to the Hanover family, and was too able a speaker in the house of commons, not to occupy a distinguished situation at the accession of George the First, and his connection with Townshend facilitated his promotion. Soon after the landing of the king, he was appointed, as I have already mentioned, paymaster general of the forces, to which was added the

* Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, vol. 2. p. 258.

† Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2.

paymastership

paymastership of Chelsea hospital; very lucrative employments, in which he considerably improved his fortune.

A dissolution taking place on the 5th of January, the new parliament met on the 17th of March, and a great majority were Whigs. The temper of the governing party, in regard to the prosecution of the Tories, and the resolution of calling the late ministry to account, evidently appeared from the proclamation for dissolving the parliament. The address of the lords contained expressions highly injurious to the queen's memory, and warmly condemned the peace, and measures of the late administration. But the address of the commons was still stronger. "The speaker having reported to the house the king's speech, Walpole expatiated upon the great happiness of the nation, by his majesty's seasonable accession to the crown; recapitulated the mismanagements of the four last years, and concluded with a motion for an address of thanks to the king, conformable to the several heads of the speech *." The motion being carried with only one dissenting voice, it was drawn up by Walpole, and contained these strong expressions †: "It is with just resentment we observe, that the Pretender still resides in Lorrain, and that he has the presumption, by declarations from thence, to stir up your majesty's subjects to rebellion; but that which raises the utmost indignation of your commons is, that it appears therein, that his hopes were built upon the measures that had been taken for some time past in Great Britain. It shall be our business to trace out those measures whereon he placed his hopes, and to bring the authors of them to condign punishment." Part of this address being warmly opposed by the Tory members, on the grounds of its being a reflection on the late queen: Walpole observed, ‡ "that nothing was farther from their intentions, than to asperse the late queen; that they rather designed to vindicate her memory, by exposing and punishing those evil counsellors, who had thrown on that good, pious, and well-meaning princess, all the blame and odium of their counsels." He added, "that they must distinguish between censuring ministers, and condemning the peace in general, and condemning particular persons. That they might, in equity and justice, do the first, because the whole nation was already sensible that their honour and true interest had been sacrificed by the late peace; that in due time they would call them to account, who made and advised such a peace; but God forbid they should ever condemn any person unheard."

Walpole shewed, in a subsequent debate, his judgment no less than his zeal. For when Sir William Wyndham endeavoured to prove that the

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1715.
New parliament.

Moves an address, reflecting on the measures of the late queen.

Conduct towards Sir William Wyndham.

* Journals.
VOL. I.

† Chandler.
K

‡ Chandler.
king's

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

king's proclamation was of dangerous consequences to the very being of parliament, and being called upon to explain himself, but refusing, many members exclaimed, "To the Tower! To the Tower!" Walpole, foreseeing that he would acquire popularity, should that measure be adopted, observed, "I am not for gratifying the desire which the member, who occasions this great debate, shews of being sent to the Tower; it would make him too considerable: but as he is a young man of good parts, who sets up for a warm champion of the late ministry, and one who was in all their secrets, I would wish him to be in the house when we inquire into the conduct of his friends, both that he may have an opportunity to defend them, and be a witness of the fairness with which we shall proceed against those gentlemen; and that it may not be said, that we take any advantage against them*." It was principally owing to his influence, that although Sir William Wyndham continued to refuse making any explanation, he was only ordered to be reprimanded by the speaker.

Prosecution
of the ex-
ministers.

The threats of the address, which implied a resolution of prosecuting the late ministers, were soon carried into execution. The papers of Bolingbroke, Strafford, and Prior, having been seized and examined, secretary Stanhope presented to the house of commons, those which related to the negotiations for peace and commerce; and a committee of secrecy, consisting of twenty-one members, being appointed to examine if there was any just cause of impeachment, Walpole was nominated chairman, and took the lead in the whole business. He drew up the masterly report, which is remarkable for perspicuity of style, method of arrangement, and for digesting, in so short a compass, such a mass of materials. William Shippen having triumphantly insinuated, that notwithstanding the clamour which had been raised against the late ministry, the secret committee would not be able to bring any proofs of their guilt, Walpole indignantly, though intemperately observed, that he wanted words to express the villany of the late Frenchified ministry; and it was judged proper to hasten the report. Accordingly, on the 9th of June, only two months after the house had ordered the committee to reduce the papers into order, Walpole read the report, which he continued without interruption five hours.

His report as
chairman of
the com-
mittee of se-
crecy.

It was divided into two parts. The first stated the clandestine negotiations with Mesnager, the French plenipotentiary, which produced two sets of preliminary articles; the one private and special, for Great Britain only, the other general, for all her allies: the deceitful offers of the French

* Political State of Great Britain.—Chandler.

plenipo-

plenipotentiaries at Utrecht, with the connivances of the ministry; the negotiation in regard to the renunciation of the Spanish monarchy; the suspension of arms; the seizure of Ghent and Bruges by the duke of Ormond, and his acting in concert with the French general; the journey of Bolingbroke to France, for arranging a separate *peace*; the negotiations of Shrewsbury and Prior, and the precipitate conclusion of the treaty of Utrecht, with a view of criminating the ministers for having deserted their allies, and betrayed the interests and honour of their country. The second part stated, their secret transactions with the Pretender; a letter from Oxford to the queen, containing a brief account of public affairs from August 6, 1710, to June 8, 1714; the desertion of the Catalans, and some other papers of less importance*.

On the conclusion of the report, Sir Thomas Hanmer moved, that the consideration should be adjourned to the 21st; and being seconded by the friends of the late administration, Walpole observed, "he could not but wonder, that those gentlemen who shewed so much impatience to have the report laid before the house, should now press for adjourning the consideration of it. That as for the committee of secrecy, as they had not yet gone through all the branches of their inquiry, he could have wished some longer time had been allowed to peruse and digest several important papers. That for this purpose, they would have deferred three weeks or a month, the laying their report before the house; but that some gentlemen having reflected on the pretended slowness of the committee, since the said report was now before them, they must e'en go through with it †." The motion of Sir Thomas Hanmer being negatived, Walpole impeached Bolingbroke of high treason, and other crimes and misdemeanors; and the question being carried with only a slight opposition of two members, Lord Coningsby stood up and said, "The worthy chairman of the committee has impeached the hand, but I impeach the head; he has impeached the clerk, I impeach the master;" and immediately impeached Robert earl of Oxford and Mortimer, of high treason. On the 21st of June, Stanhope also impeached Strafford of high crimes and misdemeanors.

The current of opinion ran so violently against the late administration, that these prosecutions were carried without much difficulty, and with little opposition. The drawing up of the articles of impeachment was entrusted to the committee of secrecy, and consequently to Walpole, who, in conjunction with Stanhope, now principally directed the house of commons. The arti-

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Impeachment of Bolingbroke, Oxford, and Strafford.

Walpole draws up the articles of impeachment.

* Reports of the secret committee, in the Journals. Abstract of the secret committee, in Historical Register, from 1714 to 1716,

vol. 1. p. 164 to 269.—Tindal, vol. 18, p. 246 to 288.

† Chandler.—Historical Register, v. 1. p. 270.

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1714 to 1720.
Conduct of
the parties
accused.
Oxford's de-
fence.
Walpole's re-
plication.
Observations
on these pro-
secutions.

cles of impeachment were severally carried up to the house of lords. Ormonde and Bolingbroke having absconded, were attainted. Oxford acted a more manly part, supported his prosecution, and defended his conduct with dignity and moderation, and made a calm and firm answer to the accusation of the commons. His defence being transmitted by the lords, was read in the lower house, where Walpole animadverted on it with great acrimony, and drew up a replication.

The prosecution of the leaders of the late administration has been constantly, and in some degree justly, held up by the Tory historians as a striking proof of the spirit of party-resentment and party-vengeance, and no less constantly defended by the Whigs. The argument, however, which Oxford advanced on his trial, which his partisans adopted in both houses, and which has been since urged in his justification, that he had acted only in obedience to the commands of the queen, was more specious than solid. If admitted in the utmost latitude, it would establish the position, that those who gave pernicious counsels to the sovereign, might shelter themselves under the sanction of those very commands which they had dictated. If the voice of the sovereign is sufficient to authorize the servants of the crown in execution of orders, however illegal, it follows then that the crown would be arbitrary; and as the king can do no wrong, no minister would be responsible for the abuse of the executive power. But there is another argument against the impeachment of the late ministers, far more convincing. It was forcibly urged by Sir William Wyndham, that the peace had been approved by two successive parliaments, and declared safe, advantageous, and honourable; should it be even allowed that the measures of the Tory administration were contrary to the honour and interests of the nation, yet with what pretence of justice could ministers be punished? our constitution knows no limits to the power of the king, lords, and commons assembled in parliament; and though a subsequent parliament may annul any laws which a former parliament had decreed, yet it cannot, and ought not to call any ministers to justice for measures which had been sanctioned by the three branches of the legislature. It is far from my intention or wish, to palliate the injustice, or to sanction the malignant spirit of party, yet I may be allowed to examine the principal motives which might have led men of such approved humanity as Townshend, Devonshire, Stanhope, and Walpole, to adopt these severe measures. The Whigs were firmly convinced, that the late queen desired to restore the Pretender, after her death; that Harley and Bolingbroke had, through the secret interest of the Pretender and his agents, obtained the dismissal of the Whig administration; that, with a view to remain in power, they found a peace with

with France to be essentially necessary; and that to obtain that peace, they had not scrupled to use the assistance of the court of St. Germain's, and the co-operation of the Jacobites in England; that they had opened secret negotiations with France, in contradiction to the leading principles of the grand alliance, and that, had not the death of the queen prevented their schemes, they would have set aside the act of settlement, and introduced a popish sovereign on the throne; and it must be confessed, that documents now become public, and then strongly suspected by the Whig leaders, place these facts in so clear a light, as to render them absolutely incontrovertible.

The imprudent conduct of the Pretender increased the animosity of the Whigs, and hastened the prosecution of his supposed adherents. His manifesto, dated August 29, 1714, sent to some of the principal ministers, contained these remarkable expressions: "*Upon the death of the princess our sister, of whose good intentions towards us, we could not for some time past well doubt; and this was the reason we then sat still,* expecting the good effects thereof, which were unfortunately prevented by her deplorable death *." Although from the very nature of the transaction, and the suppression of many papers, they could not procure such legal proof as would be admitted in a court of justice on the condemnation of a criminal, yet the collateral evidence was so convincing, as not to admit of the smallest doubt. It must, however, be confessed, that that part of the report which infers the intention of the late ministry to restore the Pretender, is extremely weak, founded only on vague conjecture and circumstantial evidence; they could not, therefore, venture to lay any great stress on such assertions, as proofs of high treason, but grounded their prosecution on the public events which related to the peace. Though animated by the powerful impressions of a high sense of national disgrace, the recollection of an escape from recent danger, and all the spirit and resentment of party, they confined their attacks to a few victims; they impeached only Oxford, Bolingbroke, and Ormond of high treason, and Strafford of high crimes and misdemeanors.

As to Bolingbroke, when Walpole brought forward his impeachment, only one member spoke in his defence, and that member was a notorious Jacobite, and when his flight was reported to the house, the bill of attainder against him passed without a single dissenting voice.

But the situation and character of Ormond were far different. When Stanhope moved for the impeachment of Ormond, Hutcheson, member for Hastings, made a long speech in his behalf, and urged many palliating circumstances; and Sir Joseph Jekyll, whose principles and conduct had always

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Imprudence
of the Pre-
tender.Bolingbroke
attainted.Ormond de-
fended by his
friends.

* Tindal, vol. 18. p. 251.

proved

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1714 to 1720.

proved him a sincere friend to the Protestant succession, spoke warmly on the same side. The debate continued above nine hours, and Ormond had so many friends, that his impeachment was carried only by a majority of forty-seven. The proceedings against Ormond would not, in all probability, have been conducted with much asperity, had he preserved the moderation, which, under his circumstances, would have been becoming; but, on the contrary, while his conduct was under inquiry before the secret committee, he lived in an unsuitable style of magnificence, affected to court popularity, and saw with complacency his name made the signal of tumult, and disloyal exclamation. Even after his impeachment, Devonshire had arranged for him a private interview with the king; but far from availing himself of this kindness, and contrary to the promise extorted from him by his Tory friends, he withdrew from the kingdom, and precluded the possibility of a return to his native country, by instantly entering into the service of the Pretender. Having once embraced that desperate measure, he was too honest and zealous to act like Bolingbroke, and obtain a pardon by sacrificing the interests of his new master, or by entering into a compromise with his prosecutors.

The Whigs
censured for
the prosecution
of Oxford.

The warmest advocates for the Whigs must admit, that in the proceedings against the earl of Oxford, party resentment was too predominant. He certainly had, either from inclination, fear, policy, or pique, defeated all the attempts of the Pretender's friends, and had been one great cause of securing the quiet succession of the house of Hanover. On the accession of George the First, he had shewn such unequivocal proofs of his attachment and triumph*, as disgusted his former friends, and there is not the least doubt that had the queen lived, Oxford would have joined the Whigs, and exerted himself in favour of the house of Hanover. But it is a justice due to Townshend and Walpole, to observe, that they strenuously insisted, Oxford should not be accused of high treason, but only tried for high crimes and misdemeanors†; and that they uniformly opposed his bill of attainder, which was no less warmly supported by Marlborough and his adherents. Oxford acted with great magnanimity during the whole course of his prosecution; and evinced a consciousness of his innocence of the charge of having promoted the succession of the Pretender, by abiding his trial.

Commence-
ment of the
Rebellion.

The multiplicity of business protracted the sitting of the parliament till the 21st of September. Before its prorogation, the tumults and riots which preceded the Rebellion had already begun. The earl of Mar set up

* "The Dragon was thought to shew more joy in proclaiming the king, than was consistent with the obligations he had received from ———. He was hissed all the way by the

mob, and some of them threw halters in his coach." Charles Ford to Swift, August 5, 1714.

† Correspondence. Period II.

the standard of the Pretender in Scotland, under the name of James the Third. His party increased, and became formidable from the number of disaffected. In this crisis, the vigilance and activity of the ministers was aided by the zeal of parliament. The habeas corpus act was suspended. The earl of Jersey and lord Landfdowne were committed to the Tower; Sir William Wyndham, * and other suspected persons of the house of commons, were apprehended †; large supplies were voted; a considerable body of men marched under the command of the duke of Argyle, and troops were obtained from Holland, by the representations of Horace Walpole, who was deputed to the Hague for that purpose. The reader will find, in the histories of the times, an account of the partial defeat of the Rebels under the earl of Mar at Dumblain, by the duke of Argyle, which effectually prevented their junction with those in the south; the total route of their force at Preston, by general Carpenter; the landing of the Pretender in Scotland; his short display of mock dignity at Perth; his flight from Scotland, and return to France, and the final suppression of the rebellion. To enter into the detail of these transactions, does not fall within the compass of the present work. It is sufficient for the author of these memoirs to observe, that vigour in counsels, exertion in parliament, readiness to forward every supply, to answer every occasion, and to facilitate the measures of government, increased the reputation of Walpole, and endeared him to his king and country.

In consideration of his services and useful talents, he was, on the 11th of October 1715, appointed first lord commissioner of the treasury, and chancellor of the exchequer, vacant by the death of the earl of Halifax, and the removal of the earl of Carlisle, who had immediately succeeded Halifax. He was raised to this high station at a very critical juncture; a rebellion in

Chapter 17.
1714 to 1716.

Walpole's
activity at
this time.

He is appointed first
lord of the
treasury, and
chancellor of
the exchequer.

* The following anecdote, relating to the arrest of Sir William Wyndham, places Lord Townshend's firmness of character in a conspicuous point of view.—It was communicated to me by his grandson Lord Sydney. When the intelligence that Sir William Wyndham was concerned in a projected rising in favour of the Pretender, was laid before the cabinet, the duke of Somerset, anxious that his son-in-law, Sir William Wyndham, should not be taken into custody, offered to be responsible for him. The ministers were inclined to give way, for fear of offending a person of the duke's consequence, who, besides his situation of master of the horse, had great influence with the Whigs. The king

was present. The proofs against Sir William Wyndham were so strong, that Lord Townshend deemed it necessary that government should not appear afraid to arrest such an offender, let his rank or connexions be what they might, and moved accordingly to have him taken into custody. Near ten minutes passed in silence before any one ventured to agree with him; when at last, two or three rose at the same moment to second him, and the arrest was decreed. As the king retired into his closet, he took hold of Lord Townshend's hand, and said, "You have done me a great service to-day."

† See State Trials, vol. 1. and Hist. Register.

the

Period II.

1714 to 1720.

Proceedings
in parlia-
ment.

the kingdom; a faction secretly aiding and abetting the Pretender; divisions in the cabinet, and a disaffected body among the Whigs, already preparing the schism which broke out in the ensuing year; and in the latter part of his life, he often adverted to the difficulty he now experienced in conciliating the discordant members of administration, and supporting the house of Brunswick on the throne.

The king's speech; the zealous addresses of congratulation made by both houses on the suppression of the rebellion; the impeachment and condemnation of the rebel lords, took up the principal attention of both houses, for a considerable time after the meeting of parliament, on the 14th of December; and the petitions in favour of the earls of Derwentwater, Nithisdale, and Kenmure, were urged with such vehemence, and so warmly supported by several members in the house of commons, as irritated Walpole, and induced him to observe, "I am moved with indignation to see that there should be such unworthy members of this great body, who can, without blushing, open their mouths in favour of rebels and parricides, who, far from making the least advance towards deserving favour, by an ingenuous discovery of the bottom of the present horrid conspiracy, have rather aggravated their guilt, both by their sullen silence and prevaricating answers; the earl of Derwentwater," added he, "pretended, and affirmed, that he went unprepared, and was drawn unawares into this rebellion; yet to my knowledge, he had been tampering with several people, to persuade them to rise in favour of the Pretender, six months before he appeared in arms *:" and with a view to prevent the house being troubled with any further petitions, which it was determined to reject, Walpole himself proposed an adjournment † to the 1st March, as it was known that their execution was to take place before that time: the motion met with so strong an opposition, that it was carried only by a majority of seven voices. But Walpole proved his indignation to originate in virtuous and disinterested motives, when he stated to the house, that he had been offered £. 60,000 ‡ to save the life of one single person (the earl of Derwentwater). He also spoke, as one of the managers for the commons, in the prosecution of the earl of Wintown, another of the rebel lords; and he seems in every instance to have urged the necessity of adopting severe measures in the present alarming crisis; a mode of conduct so opposite to the natural bias of his temper, which always leaned to the side of humanity, as proved his full conviction, that too much lenity shewn to persons taken in flagrant rebellion, would at this period have proved dangerous to the state.

* Oldmixon, p. 631.

† Political State of Great Britain, 1716.—

‡ Second letter to Robert Walpole, Esquire, 30. Chandler.—Tindal.—Etough.

Much

Much has been said of the severity shewn by government to the people who took up arms in favour of the Pretender; and from the accounts of the party writers, it might be supposed, that thousands and tens of thousands had fallen sacrifices to their mistaken principles; that no clemency was shewn to any of the rebels; no distinction made between the leaders and their deluded followers. But on a candid investigation of the fact, on the authority of the persons who have condemned these measures, the result will be, that *three* lords were beheaded on Tower-hill; that the judges having found many guilty of high treason in Lancashire, *two-and-twenty* were executed at Preston and Manchester; that of a great number found guilty at London, only *four* were hanged *. Such were the lenient proceedings against the rebels, which writers, adopting a peevish expression of the great Lord Somers, have magnified into the proscriptions of Marius and Sylla; and fascinated by the metaphorical eloquence of Bolingbroke, have taken in its full latitude his malignant assertion, "That the violence of the Whigs dyed the royal ermines with blood †." In fact, no government can exist, if *all* rebels taken with arms in their hands are permitted to escape with impunity; and too great lenity under a new king, who was a foreigner, struggling against a competitor claiming the crown by hereditary right, and supported by all the Roman Catholics, and the principal Tories, would have been not only imprudent, but even inhuman; because it would have held up impunity to those who should raise the standard of insurrection in future. Nor did it ever happen, on the conclusion of a rebellion for a disputed succession, that so few sacrifices were made to the public security.

* Smollet, Vol. 2. p. 311.

† Smollet.—Belsham's Memoirs, vol. 1. p. 113.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH:

1716.

Illness of Walpole.—Recovery.—Septennial Bill.—Impatience of the King to visit Hanover.—Repeal of the restraining Clause in the Act of Settlement.—Misunderstanding between the King and the Prince of Wales, who is appointed Guardian of the Realm.—Departure of the King for Hanover.

Illness and
recovery.

May 11th.

THE activity of Walpole's exertions at this important period, and the great corporeal and mental fatigue to which they subjected him, brought on a severe illness, which nearly hurried him to the grave. His recovery was at length effected, but its progress was so gradual, that he was, for a long time, incapacitated from attending to the business of the nation. His restoration to health was forwarded by a temporary retreat to his favourite residence at Chelsea, from which place, he writes to his brother, in these terms: "I have been here about ten days, and find so great a benefit from the air, that I gather strength daily, and hope as much time more will recover me from the lowest and weakest condition that ever poor mortal was alive in, and I shall be able to get to town and do business again." Congratulations on the recovery of a man, to whom the Protestant establishment owed so much, and who was the soul of his party, flowed in from all quarters. Numerous verses were made on the event, and Rowe, the great dramatic poet, did not disdain to write a ballad on the occasion *.

Septennial
bill.

During this interval, the septennial bill was brought into parliament. Although Walpole was not able to give this measure his support in the house of commons, yet, as it had been previously arranged with his concurrence, and as he also constantly opposed the repeal, it has always been justly considered an act of his administration.

This memorable bill, which is to be considered as the bulwark of our civil and religious liberties, because it effectually supported the house of Brunswick on the throne; was undoubtedly one of the most daring uses, or, ac-

* See Collection of Whig Ballads, or Pills to purge State Melancholy, part 2.

cording

cording to the representations of its opponents, abuses of parliamentary power that ever was committed since the revolution: for, it not only lengthened the duration of future parliaments, but the members who had been elected only for three years, prolonged, of their own authority, the term of their continuance for four years more. The great body of the Whigs, influenced by these considerations, were, at the first proposition, averse to the measure, and did not agree to give their assistance in support of it, till mature deliberation had convinced them of its necessity. During the debates which took place on this occasion, the arguments of opposition and defence, were not unequal to the importance and dignity of the subject. We, who live at this distance of time, without being heated by the warmth of party, without sufficiently considering the temper and state of the nation, and without weighing the peculiar circumstances which occasioned its introduction, must confess, that in theory, the arguments of those who opposed it, are the most specious and convincing; but if we recur to the events of the times, and the state of the country, we must applaud the wisdom of those who sacrificed speculation to practice. It is the remark of a judicious author, "That the act of septennial parliaments was passed, when the kingdom was threatened with an immediate invasion, when a rebellion had but just been quelled, and when the peace and safety of the nation depended on the use of this power by parliament. Such was the opinion of the people at that time, and the act met with general approbation, from the general conviction of its necessity *."

That the necessity must have been great and evident, appears from the consideration, that it was supported by men of the first rank, independence, and probity in the kingdom; that in the house of lords, where it was proposed by the duke of Devonshire, there were only 36 voices against it, and that, on being sent to the house of commons, there was a majority of 264 against 121. But whatever opinion might be formed of the justice of the right exercised by parliament, in repealing the triennial bill and substituting septennial parliaments, yet it can scarcely be contested, that it has in effect been highly advantageous to the well-being of the legislature, and to the real interests of the nation. The speaker, Onslow, who was no ill judge of parliamentary proceedings, was frequently heard to declare †, That the passing of the septennial bill formed the era of the emancipation of the British house of commons from its former dependence on the crown and the house of lords. From that period it has risen in consequence and strength.

* Adams's Letter against Paine,

† Communicated by Sir George Colebrook.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

We who live to enjoy the benefits of an act, which has greatly contributed to set bounds to faction, which has relieved us from the mischievous effects of too frequent elections, and from the interference of foreign powers; which has given permanence and independence to our councils, and prevented those frequent changes of men and measures, which left us open to every fluctuation of public sentiment, to every impulse of craft and artifice, we ought not too severely to scrutinize the arguments which were used in support of a measure recommended by the necessity of the times, and which subsequent experience has demonstrated to be no less beneficial and prudent, than bold and decisive. The immediate effect is best ascertained by the unceasing clamors of a desperate faction, whose hopes were at once destroyed by a step which placed at a great distance the chance of influencing the public mind, and producing dangerous ferments by the accustomed means of popular delusion. History enables us to ascertain its more remote consequences; and whoever fairly considers the permanence of peace, the energy of war, and amelioration of jurisprudence which have resulted to the nation; the wisdom of counsel, boldness of eloquence, and increase of importance which have distinguished the commons, since the period of its formation, must acknowledge that many of the most inestimable blessings of our constitution are to be attributed to this measure, which originally appeared to invade its first principles. It is to be hoped, that there are few persons who would desire to replunge the nation into that feverish state which attends frequent elections in cities and counties, and to revive that perpetual enmity which must arise from the frequent agitation of contradictory interests, and the investigation of claims, which can hardly be once decided, before they are again contested.

Observation
of lord So-
mers.

Although a question like this cannot be decided by the opinion of any individual, yet surely the judgment of lord Somers, the constant friend of liberty, and the oracle of the revolution, is intitled to some respect, and the time and manner of giving it, render it peculiarly interesting. While the bill was in agitation, Dr. Friend, the celebrated physician, called on lord Townshend, and informed him, that lord Somers was at that moment restored to the full possession of his faculties, by a fit of the gout, which suspended the effect of his paralytic complaint. Townshend immediately waited on Somers, who, as soon as he came into the room embraced him, and said, "I have just heard of the work in which you are engaged, and congratulate you upon it; I never approved the triennial bill, and always considered it in effect, the reverse of what it was intended. You have my hearty approbation in this business,

ness, and *I think it will be the greatest support possible to the liberty of the country* *."

The impatience of the king to visit his German dominions now became so great, as totally to overcome every restraint of prudence, and suggestion of propriety, and imperiously to demand indulgence, though the unsettled state of the public mind, from the effect of rebellion, hardly yet intirely suppressed, and the prejudice excited by the new measures, both of legislation and prosecution, should have opposed insuperable obstacles to his desire. The ministry were considerably embarrassed on this occasion; and drew up a strong remonstrance, representing the inconveniences which would result from the projected journey. This remonstrance, however, not only failed of success, but so far exasperated the king, that he declared he would not endure a longer confinement in this kingdom. Under these circumstances, the ministry could not venture to make any further opposition. When the act was passed, which settled the succession on the house of Brunswick, it was accompanied with various restrictions, limiting the future sovereign in several instances. Some of these restrictions had been repealed during the reign of queen Anne. But the clause which restrained the king from going out of the kingdom, without consent of parliament, still subsisted. It must be allowed to have been a necessary limitation, and its continuance would have been highly beneficial to the true interests of England. For no circumstance more impeded public business, or more alienated the public mind, than the frequent visits which the two first sovereigns of the house of Brunswick made to the electorate of Hanover. This predilection to their native country, was in them both natural and excusable; yet, for the benefit of England, it ought to have been confined within due bounds, although it is not probable that the parliament would ever have withheld their consent, yet the necessity of obtaining that consent would doubtless have checked the too frequent repetition of the demand, and have prevented the absence of the sovereign in times of public emergency. But at the present juncture, it was considered more respectful to obtain a repeal, than to subject the sovereign to the necessity of obtaining a parliamentary consent, for which messages must have been sent to both houses, previous to each voyage. When the motion was made by Sir John Cope, to repeal the restricting clause, and seconded by Hampden, it passed unanimously, not a single member, amongst many who were dissatisfied with the succession of the Hanover line, venturing to make the slightest opposition to the repeal of a clause, which, however conformable to the hopes of the nation, could not but be considered as invidious and disgraceful to the new sovereign. The ministers were

Chapter 13.

1716.

The king resolves to go to Hanover.

Repeal of the restraining clause in the act of settlement.

* Communicated by lord Sydney, and Charles Townshend, esquire, who frequently heard this anecdote related by their father, the late honourable Thomas Townshend, son of lord Townshend.

often

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

of the king's
of the prince of
Wales.

The king's
jealousy of
the prince of
Wales.

often obliged to make the most pressing remonstrances, as well to prevent the absence of the king, as to hasten his return; these remonstrances were often ineffectual, but always offensive; and Walpole, during the course of his administration, lamented an evil which he had in vain attempted to remedy, and which nothing but the continuance of the restraining clause, or an absolute cession of the electorate, could have prevented. Some authors, in treating of these long and frequent absences, have thrown out reproachful suggestions on the framers of the act of settlement, for not insisting that a foreign prince should resign his continental dominions before he assumed the possession of the crown. Such a provision did not escape the sagacity of the legislators of the day, and would, most probably, have been carried into effect, but for the obvious certainty that no prince would renounce the quiet possession of his continental dominions, however small, to acquire the brilliant, but precarious dignity of sovereign of a large kingdom, exposed to the evils of a powerful faction, and the dangers of a disputed succession. These considerations deterred the framers of the bill from proposing a measure, which would infallibly have frustrated all their other efforts for the preservation of our civil and religious liberties.

This difficult point being adjusted, another question, of equal delicacy, occurred, which related to the method of carrying on the government during the king's absence. The most obvious and natural method was the appointment of the prince of Wales to the regency; but this measure was obstructed by an unfortunate jealousy which the king entertained of his son.

This misunderstanding had already commenced at Hanover, before the death of Queen Anne. Sophia had often behaved to George the First with distance and reserve, and did not always consult him in regard to the affairs of England. She was extremely fond of her grandson, and in several instances, of great importance, had acted in concurrence with him alone, and particularly, the demand of the writ for him to sit in the house of peers, as duke of Cambridge, was made without the knowledge*, or against the inclination of George the First. This preference of her grandson, naturally created a coldness between the father and son, which was afterwards increased by the artful proposal of the Tories, in voting the civil list, that a separate revenue of £. 100,000 per annum should be settled on the prince of Wales. The motion was negatived by the influence of the Whigs†. The eagerness which the prince expressed to obtain the title and office of regent,

* Communicated by lady Suffolk, who was then at Hanover, to the late earl of Orford. See also Chap. 8. and Clarendon's Letter to Secretary Bromley. Correspondence, period I.

† Chandler.

augmented

augmented the disgust of the king. Conscious that he was instigated in most of his proceedings by the duke of Argyle, his groom of the stole, whose fascinating manners and specious address had gained a great ascendancy over the prince, he insisted on the dismissal of the duke. Under these impressions, the king was unwilling to entrust him with the government, without joining other persons in the commission, and without limiting his authority by the most rigorous restrictions. With a view of forming a regency under those conditions, he submitted his wishes, through the channel of Bernsdorf, to the council. Their answer on this subject, declared, that, "on a careful perusal of precedents, finding no instance of persons being joined in commission with the prince of Wales, and few, if any restrictions, they were of opinion, that the constant tenor of ancient practice could not conveniently be receded from *." Although he reluctantly submitted to consign to the prince the sole direction of affairs, yet, instead of the title of regent, he appointed him *guardian of the realm and lieutenant*, an office unknown in England since it was enjoyed by Edward the black prince †.

Having made this arrangement, and removed the duke of Argyle from the household of the prince, and from the command of the army in Scotland, he committed to Townshend and Walpole the principal direction of affairs, and, accompanied by secretary Stanhope, took his departure from England on the 9th of July, and arrived on the 15th at Hanover.

Chapter 13.

1716.

Departure
from Eng-
land.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH:

1716.

State and Disunion of the Ministry.—Cabals of Sunderland.—Intrigues and Venality of the Hanoverian Junto.

WE have hitherto contemplated the ministry in which Townshend and Walpole took the lead, in the highest degree prosperous and respectable. It would naturally be supposed, that union and tranquillity in the cabinet were indispensably necessary to produce such wise counsels and vigorous measures, but this supposition is not verified by fact. The seeds of discontent

Disunion of
the ministry.

* Letter from Lord Townshend to Bernsdorf. Correspondence, Period II.

† Political State of Great Britain, 1716,—Tindal.

had

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Sunderland
discontented.

had already taken root, and were bringing to maturity by the petty intrigues and selfish cabals of those Hanoverian mistresses and ministers who had followed the fortunes of the king.

The principal person who fomented the disunion in the cabinet, was Charles earl of Sunderland, whose father, Robert, is so notorious in the annals of this country, for his great abilities and consummate treachery. He had married Anne, second daughter of the duke of Marlborough, and had served under his father-in-law, both in a military and diplomatic capacity. The origin of the misunderstanding between him and Townshend, may be dated from the death of queen Anne. At that period, Sunderland, as the great leader of the Whigs, and in consideration of his services to the Hanover family, was led to expect that he should be placed at the head of the administration, and become the person under whose auspices the new cabinet was to be formed. Bothmar had represented him as a man who had always shewn more attachment to the king than any other. He had first recommended Sunderland to be lord lieutenant of Ireland, and Townshend to be secretary of state; but on Sunderland's expressing his desire to have that office, Bothmar proposed that Townshend should be provided in another place. This arrangement was first suggested on the 13th of August, yet, on the 31st of the same month, Bothmar expressed his wishes to Robethon, that it might be given to Townshend, although Sunderland had asked for it*. In fact, the king was at this period influenced by Bothmar, Bothmar was wholly governed by Townshend, and the new administration was principally settled by him. Although Sunderland was received with singular attention by the king on his arrival, yet it is remarkable, that his name does not appear among the lords justices added in the list communicated by Bothmar to the seven great officers of the realm. The aspiring Sunderland, under whom Townshend had hitherto acted a subordinate part, could not brook this preference; though he did not openly shew his disgust, yet he scarcely took any active part in defending the measures of government; he who was before accustomed to make a conspicuous figure in every debate, seems to have remained almost uniformly silent; and from the accession of George the First, till the beginning of 1717, his name seldom occurs in the proceedings of the house of lords. He had been nominated lord lieutenant of Ireland, which he considered a species of banishment, and as a place far below his expectations. Soon after the death of the marquis of Wharton, he was appointed privy seal. But his promotion to this high office did not remove his disgust.

* Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2.

This spirit of discontent had not been confined to Sunderland. Nottingham, whose Tory principles could never coalesce with a Whig administration, and whose vehement interference in favour of the condemned rebel lords, had given offence, was dismissed from the presidency of the council. Somerset was removed from his post of master of the horse, on account of some indiscreet expressions on the arrest of his son-in-law, Sir William Wyndham.

The earl of Halifax had estimated his services and talents at so high a rate, that he expected to have been appointed lord high treasurer: created first-commissioner, he was highly chagrined; nor was his disgust removed by the garter, the title of earl, and the transfer of the place of auditor of the exchequer to his nephew. Inflamed by disappointed ambition, he entered into cabals with the Tory leaders, for the removal of those with whom he had so long cordially acted; but his death, on the 10th of May 1715, put an end to his intrigues*.

Marlborough also was among the dissatisfied. Soon after the death of queen Anne, Bothmar says of him, "He is not pleased that he is not of the regency, and that there is any man but the king higher than him in this country †;" and his disgust was not diminished after the king's arrival: For although he was appointed commander in chief, yet he did not enjoy the smallest share of power or confidence. George the First never forgot, that during the campaign of 1708, when he commanded the Imperialists, Marlborough had contrived, that no troops or supplies were sent to the Rhine, but that the whole force was destined for the army in Flanders, by which arrangement he had been obliged to act on the defensive, and could not distinguish his command by any successful operation against the enemy. In consequence of this disinclination, Marlborough, though commander in chief, could not obtain even a lieutenantcy for a friend; and he not unfrequently requested Pulteney, who was secretary at war, to solicit in his room, adding, "but do not say it is for me, for whatever I ask is sure to be denied."

To these discontents Walpole alludes in a private letter to his brother Horace, on the removal of Nottingham ‡. "I don't well know what account to give you of our situation here. *There are storms in the air, but I doubt not, they will soon be blown over.*" In this instance, however, his prediction was not verified; Sunderland increased his party with a number of disaffected persons. He particularly gained among the Whigs, Carleton, Cadogan, Lechmere, and Hamden; courted the Tories; entered into cabals against his colleagues; and

Chapter 13.

1716.

Nottingham returns to the Tories.

Somerset dismissed from the place of master of the horse.

Halifax disaffected.

Dies.

Marlborough dissatisfied.

Walpole too secure.

* Tindal, vol. 18. p. 371. † Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2. p. 640. ‡ Walpole Papers.

Period II.

1714 to 1720.

Hanoverian
venality.

Character of
the duchess
of Kendal.

was prepared to use all his efforts, and employ any opportunities which might offer, to prejudice the king against them *; nor were such means and opportunities wanting.

One of the greatest difficulties which Townshend and Walpole had to encounter, arose from the management of the German junto, who principally governed the king. This junto, at his accession, and for some time after, consisted of his two mistresses, the duchess of Kendal and the countess of Darlington, and his German ministers and favourites.

Erengard Melesina, baroness of Schulenburg, and princess of Eberstein, was the favourite mistress of George the First, when electoral prince, and after his separation from his wife, the unfortunate Sophia, princess of Zell, he is said to have espoused her with his left hand, a species of marriage not uncommon in Germany. She accompanied the king to England, and was, in 1716, created baroness of Dundalk, countess and marchioness of Dungannon of the kingdom of Ireland; and, in 1718, made a peeress of Great Britain, by the title of baroness of Glastonbury, countess of Feverham, and duchess of Kendal †, by which title she is commonly known. Her influence over the king was so considerable, that the different parties in the cabinet, and the leaders in opposition, paid the most obsequious court, and even the empress of Germany maintained a private correspondence with her, with a view to induce the king to renew the connection between England and the house of Austria. This ascendancy is the more surprising, when it is considered that she did not possess much beauty of countenance, or elegance of person; for the electress Sophia, pointing her out to Mrs. Howard, said ‡, "Do you see that maukin? you would scarcely believe that she has captivated my son;" and according to Sir Robert Walpole, (whose opinion, however, as he did not readily speak in any foreign language, and she could not converse in English, must be received with caution) her intellects were mean and contemptible. Money was with her the principal and prevailing consideration, and he was often heard to say, she was so venal a creature, that she would have sold the king's honour for a shilling advance to the best bidder §. She affected great and constant regularity in her public devotions, frequently attending several Lutheran chapels in the same day. The minister of the Lutheran church in the Savoy, refused to admit her to the sacrament; but she was received at the church of the same communion in the city ||.

* Walpole's letter to Stanhope, July 30th, 1716.—Correspondence, Period II.

† Extinct Peerage.

‡ From Lord Orford.

§ Etough.—Minutes of a conversation with Sir Robert Walpole.

|| Etough.

His

His other mistress, whom he brought over with him to England, was Sophia Charlotte, of the house of Offlen. She was sister of the celebrated countess of Platen, mistress of the elector Ernest Augustus, and wife of baron Kilmanseck, from whom she was separated. On the death of her husband, in 1721, she was created countess of Leinster in the kingdom of Ireland, baroness of Brentford, and countess of Darlington*. She was a woman of great beauty, but became extremely corpulent as she advanced in years. Her power over the king was not equal to that of the duchess of Kendal; but although she was younger, and more accomplished than her rival, several persons about the court, conceiving her influence to be greater than it really was, ineffectually endeavoured to rise by her means. Her character for rapacity was not inferior to that of the duchess of Kendal.

Chapter 13.

1716.

Character of
the countess
of Darlington.

The Hanoverian ministers who had the principal influence over the king, were baron Bothmar, count Bernsdorf, and Robethon. Baron Bothmar had been the king's principal agent in England during the latter years of queen Anne. By his advice George had almost uniformly acted; and it was principally owing to his interposition, that Townshend was entrusted with the chief power, and became the head of the new administration. Bothmar now conceived that his services could not be too amply rewarded by the minister to whose elevation he had greatly contributed; he took umbrage on finding that his recommendations were often rejected, and that sufficient respect was not paid to his opinion.

Character of
Bothmar.

Count Bernsdorf, of an illustrious family, solid talents, and considerable experience, was the minister whom George consulted in foreign affairs. On his arrival in England, he was anxious to increase his consequence, and improve his fortune. But finding his views opposed by Townshend and Walpole, he became disgusted, and joining with Bothmar and the mistresses, was prepared to forward any attempt which might be made to drive them from the helm.

Bernsdorf.

The party was farther strengthened by the accession of Robethon, the king's French secretary. This man was of a French refugee family, and became private secretary to king William, from whose service he entered into that of the house of Brunswick. He soon became confidential secretary, first of the duke of Zell, and afterwards of George the First, when elector of Hanover, and was the person employed in carrying on the confidential correspondence with England†. This private intercourse gave him a considerable ascendancy over his master; and being a man of address, great knowledge of mankind, and well acquainted with the leading members in both houses of parliament,

Robethon.

* Extinct Peerage.

† Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2.

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1714 to 1720.

Two Turks
in the service
of the king.

Rapacity and
ambition of
these persons.

he was enabled to act a conspicuous part. His situation with the king rendered him insolent and presumptuous; his necessities were great, and his venality was so notorious as to excite the displeasure, and call forth the remonstrances of Townshend and Walpole; consequently, he became their inveterate enemy, zealously promoted the views of Sunderland, and attached himself to those who were labouring to obtain their dismissal.

To these persons of ostensible consequence, must be added two Turks, known by the names of Mustapha and Mahomet*. They had been taken prisoners by the Imperialists in Hungary, and had served the king when electoral prince, who was wounded in that campaign, with such zeal and fidelity, that he took them to Hanover, brought them to England, and made them pages of the back-stairs. Their influence over their master was so great, that their names are mentioned in a dispatch of count Broglie to the king of France, as possessing a large share of the king's confidence. These low foreigners obtained considerable sums of money for recommendation to places.

These mistresses, ministers, and favourites, coming from a poor electorate, considered England as a kind of land of promise, and at the same time so precarious a possession, that they endeavoured to enrich themselves with all possible speed†. With this view they sold their influence over their master at a high price, and disposed of all the places and honours which the king could confer, without the intervention of his English ministers. Their venality arose to so great a height, as obliged Walpole to remonstrate against them; but the king almost sanctioned the abuse, by replying with a smile, "I suppose you are also paid for your recommendations‡." Private emoluments, and concealed advantages, did not however satisfy their rapaciousness; they began to aim at the honours of rank and pre-eminence. The ladies were desirous of being made peeresses; Bothmar and Bernsdorf, aspired to a seat in the house of lords; while Robethon, affected to content himself with the title of baronet. To these pretensions, which the conduct of William had sanctioned, the act of settlement presented an insuperable barrier. In-

* Pope has mentioned one of these Turks in terms of approbation, in his moral essays, Epistle 2nd, to a lady.

"From peer or bishop 'tis no easy thing,
"To draw the man who loves his God, or king,
"Alas! I copy (or my draught would fail)
"From HONEST MAH'MET, or plain parson
"Hale."

Portraits of the two Turks are on the great

stair-case in Kensington palace. Lyfon's Environs of London, vol. 3. p. 103.

† During the whole reign of George the First, after the resignation of the duke of Somerset, no master of the horse was appointed; the profits of the place were appropriated to the duchess of Kendal. The emoluments of the mastership of the buck hounds, were also reserved for one of the Germans.

‡ From Lord Orford.

terest soon enabled them to discover that the regulations of that act did not extend to Ireland; the baroness of Schulenberg was gratified with the title of duchess of Munster, and the Irish establishment loaded with pensions. But this advancement did not satisfy that ambitious woman, who was less gratified by this title, than irritated against Townshend and Walpole, for opposing her demand of being created an English peeress. The ministers and secretary, animated with a similar rancour, behaved with great insolence towards the leaders of the cabinet, inasmuch that Walpole once, in the presence of the king, rebuked the presumption of an impertinent assertion, by the stern reproof, "Mentiris impudentissime*." In consequence of these repeated altercations, the Hanoverian crew endeavoured to counteract, by their intrigues, the influence of Townshend and Walpole, and infuse into the king's mind, such suspicions and prejudices as, assisted by other intrigues, ended in the dismissal of those able ministers.

These, and many other mischiefs, which were the necessary consequences of the introduction of a foreign family, cannot be concealed or controverted. Yet, while we relate and deplore them in their full latitude, let us not so far forget the blessings derived from the same source, as to overlook our escape from still greater evils. This event, which was occasionally productive of great inconveniences, was the price paid for the preservation of our religion and constitution. The option was necessarily made between Hanover and Rome; between civil and religious liberty, accompanied by temporary disadvantages, or papal and despotic tyranny, followed by sure and permanent degradation.

* From Lord Orford:

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Resisted by
Townshend
and Walpole.

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1714 to 1720.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH;

1716.

*Acquisition of Bremen and Verden.—Alliance with France.*Acquisition
of Bremen
and Verden.

HANOVER now became the centre of the most important negotiations. The two great objects of these negotiations were to complete the acquisition of Bremen and Verden, and to secure tranquillity at home, by a strict union with France.

At the peace of Westphalia, the archbishopric of Bremen, and bishopric of Verden, were ceded to Sweden. But their commodious situation, between the territories of the house of Brunswick and the sea, rendered them a desirable object of acquisition to the dukes of Zell and Brunswick, and those princes had formed several attempts to obtain possession, but had always failed of success. At length George the First obtained what his ancestors could not accomplish. Frederic the Fourth of Denmark, having, in 1712, conquered Holstein, Sleswic, Bremen, and Verden, and unable to retain them, or even to resist the arms of Sweden, on the return of Charles the Twelfth from Turkey, found it prudent to cede a part, that he might not be deprived of the whole. He accordingly concluded a treaty, which though long settled, was not ratified till the 17th of July, 1715, with George, as elector of Hanover; by which it was agreed, that Bremen and Verden should be put into the possession of the king of England, on the condition, of paying £. 150,000, and declaring war against Sweden. In consequence of this treaty, George joined the coalition against Sweden, and a British fleet was, in 1715, dispatched to the Baltic, with the pretence of protecting our trade against the Swedish depredations, but for the real purpose of compelling Sweden to accept a sum of money as an equivalent for those dominions.

The king of Sweden, provoked at the conduct of George the First, and well aware, that in the capacity of elector only, he would not have joined the confederacy against him, directed his efforts of vengeance against the English; his ministers at London, and at the Hague, caballed with the disaffected in England, and preparations were making to invade Great Britain, with a considerable army, in favour of the dethroned family.

The Pretender did not fail taking advantage of this transaction, to render the new * king odious to his English subjects; and he artfully observed,

in his new manifesto, "Whilst the principal powers engaged in the late wars enjoy the blessings of peace, and are attentive to discharge their debts, and ease their people, Great Britain, in the midst of peace, feels all the load of a war, new debts are contracted, new armies are raised at home, Dutch forces are brought into these kingdoms; and by taking possession of the Duchy of Bremen, in violation of the public faith, a door is opened by the usurper to let in an inundation of foreigners from abroad, and to reduce these nations to a state of dependence on one of the most inconsiderable provinces of the empire."

The advocates for Townshend and Walpole, have asserted that they uniformly counteracted the acquisition of Bremen and Verden, and that their opposition to that favourite object of Hanoverian politics, was the principal cause of their subsequent disgrace. But whatever blame or merit results from that measure, attaches to them; for I discover among the papers committed to my inspection, unequivocal proofs, that they approved, in the strongest manner, the proposed acquisition. Slingelandt, afterwards pensionary of Holland, and the confidential friend of lord Townshend, had declared, in a letter dated March 10th, 1717, "As much as the crown of Great Britain is superior to the electoral cap, so much is the king interested to sacrifice Bremen and Verden for a peace, rather than continue any longer in a war." But Townshend was so far from approving the sacrifice, that he observed in answer; "I am of opinion, that every attempt should be made to induce the king of Sweden to make peace, without depriving him of any of his dominions situated out of the empire, for in regard to his German provinces, I must tell you frankly, without any partiality to the pretensions of the king, but simply with a view to the interests of Great Britain and Holland, that we must not suffer Sweden to retain any longer those gates of the empire, which, since the peace of Westphalia, she has never made use of but for the purpose of introducing confusion and disorder, or of turning Germany from the pursuit of its true interests against France." And in another part of the same letter, he adds, "I lay it down as a principle, that for the advantage and tranquillity of Europe, the king of Sweden ought to be deprived of those provinces which have supplied him with the means of doing so much mischief."

Horace Walpole, in his pamphlet, "The Interest of Great Britain steadily pursued," has amply expatiated on this subject, and explained the motives which induced his brother to favour this purchase. "It is the interest of this country," he observes, "that those two provinces, which command the navigation of the Elbe and Weser, the only inlets from the British seas into Ger-

many,

Period II.
1714 to 1729.

Treaty with
France.

many, and which, in case of any disturbance in the North, are most capable of protecting or interrupting the British trade to Hamburg, should rather be annexed to the king's electoral dominions, than remain in the hands of Denmark, who has frequently formed pretensions on that city; or of Sweden, who has molested our commerce in the Baltic."

The next great object which the British cabinet had in view, was to secure the tranquillity of Great Britain, by forming such alliances with the European powers, as would counteract the intrigues of the Pretender abroad, deprive him of foreign assistance, and awe his followers into submission.

Townshend and Walpole were well aware, that the danger of invasions and interior troubles, did not so much proceed from the efforts of the disaffected at home, as from the hopes of assistance from France. If the prospect of French interposition could be removed, or the effect counteracted, tranquillity would be the necessary and unavoidable consequence. To attain that great end, only two methods could be adopted; the one to form so intimate a connection with the emperor and Holland, as to set France at defiance; and the other to secure the friendship of France, and to employ the public and private efforts of that power, which had hitherto either openly or covertly promoted the restoration of the dethroned family, and encouraged the efforts of the Jacobites in Great Britain, against that very family, and in support of the Protestant succession.

No charge was ever more frequently or more violently urged against the principles of the administration, which Walpole either directed, or in which he co-operated before he acquired the power and influence of prime minister, than that of deserting the house of Austria, our natural ally, and of joining with France, our inveterate enemy. I shall therefore lay before the reader the motives which induced the two brother ministers to prefer, at this particular juncture, the connection with France to the union with the House of Austria. To Townshend and Walpole is undoubtedly due the credit or reproach of having first formed the project of that alliance, and of having carried that scheme into execution, in opposition to the opinion of Sunderland and Stanhope, and in direct contradiction to the first views of the Hanoverian ministers.

Death of
Louis the
Fourteenth.

The death of Louis the Fourteenth, on the 1st of September 1715, had given a new aspect to the affairs of France and of Europe, and hastened the final conclusion of those complicated negotiations which the treaty of Utrecht had entailed upon a British administration. Although, during the latter days of that bigotted and ambitious monarch, the blessings of peace were the constant theme of his conversation, a passion for glory, and the frenzy of war,

war, still lurked in his heart. His cabals with the mal-contented in England, his connivance at the intrigues of Ormond and Bolingbroke at Paris, the permission of providing arms and ammunition, and the preparations making at Dunkirk for an attack upon England, were too manifest to escape observation.

Under these circumstances, the earl of Stair, who had superseded Prior in his embassy at Paris, made secret overtures to the duke of Orleans, who was apprehensive lest the king of Spain should wrest the regency out of his hands; and at a meeting with the abbe du Bois, the confidential agent * of the duke of Orleans, promised him the assistance of England to secure the regency to the duke on the death of Louis the Fourteenth, and his succession to the crown of France, should the dauphin, afterwards Louis the Fifteenth, die without issue. Stair reiterated these assurances in a personal interview with the duke; who solemnly pledged himself not to assist the Pretender, and to demolish the sluices at Mardyke. The same offers were renewed, in a still stronger manner, on the death of the king of France. Hints were at the same time thrown out, that the true way to establish a perfect understanding between the two countries, would be to send the Pretender out of Lorraine, and his two adherents, Ormond and Bolingbroke, out of France. But the duke of Orleans had no sooner succeeded in annulling the testament of Louis the Fourteenth, and secured to himself the regency without restrictions, than he ceased to express himself so warm a friend to George the First; but while he gave assurances that he would demolish Mardyke, answered nothing positive with respect to the Pretender, Ormond, and Bolingbroke, and secretly assisted, or at least connived at, the invasion of Great Britain.

When these attempts of the Pretender had failed of success, and the standard of rebellion was overthrown, the regent found it his interest † to court the friendship of England, whose assistance might be necessary in securing to him the crown of France in case of the death of Louis the Fifteenth, who was a weak and sickly boy. It was generally suspected that Philip the Fifth would not think himself bound by his renunciation of the crown of France; and as Spain, under the administration of cardinal Alberoni, was beginning to awake from her lethargy, and to make vast preparations both by land and sea, du Bois suggested that the sole purpose of these exertions was to assert the rights of Philip to the crown of France. The regent ac-

* Hardwicke State Papers, vol. 2.

† The sudden change of behaviour of the regent and his court, occasioned by the suppression of the rebellion, appears in lord Stair's Journal, "A la cour on est tout étonné; les plus sages commencent à traiter le Chevalier

de St. George du Pretendant. Il y a deux jours qu'il étoit le roy d'Angleterre par tout, et tout le monde avoit levé le masque. Il n'y avoit plus un seul François, quasi personne de la cour, qui mettoit le pied chez moy."

Hardwicke's State Papers, vol. 2. p. 550.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Alliances
with the Em-
peror and
Holland.

Vigorous and
prudent mea-
sures of the
British cabi-
net.

cordingly renewed his overtures; but the king, incensed at his former equivocal conduct, would not cordially listen to his offers, and opened a negotiation with the court of Vienna and the States General for a separate defensive alliance. In consequence of these resolutions, the ancient alliance with the United Provinces was renewed at Westminster on the 16th of February, and a new defensive treaty with the Emperor on the 25th of May; and the British cabinet informed the regent, that the departure of the Pretender to the other side of the Alps, was an indispensable preliminary. In vain France attempted to prevent the union of the three powers, by offering to conclude a defensive alliance with Great Britain and the United Provinces, and in case of a war with the Emperor, to observe a neutrality in the Low Countries. The insidiousness of this proposal, did not escape the observation of Townshend, who, in a letter to Horace Walpole, reprobated it as chimerical and full of delusion*; and expressed a determination to form such alliances with the Emperor and the States General, as would let the French see, that if they had a mind to fall out with one of them, they would certainly bring the rest into the quarrel.

These vigorous measures alarmed the regent; and induced him now to court, with zeal and sincerity, the friendship of England. Stair availed himself of these favourable sentiments, to promote the success of the negotiation. But his address, and the influence which he had gained over the regent, gave umbrage to Torcy, d'Huxelles, and the French ministers who were averse to the treaty; and they had interest sufficient to have the negotiation transferred

* Letter from Townshend to Horace Walpole, 27th December 1715. Walpole Papers.

"This morning the three mails, which came in from Holland, brought me your letters of the 27th and 31st N. S. which I have read to his majesty, who was glad to see that the French ambassador was disappointed in his hopes of the great effects his proposal of neutrality for the Austrian Low Countries, in case of a war, would have in Holland. Indeed the project seems so chimerical, and is so full of delusion, that it was hardly fit to be seriously offered by one, or received by the other. And none but France, who is used to contrive such amusing schemes, could pretend to propose to stipulate with a third power, a neutrality for the dominions belonging to another, who may not consent to it. For what could such a convention between the Dutch and the French signify, if the emperor, who is master of the

country, should not think it for his interest to mind it? Methinks we are giving opportunities to France to play over the same game they did after the peace of Ryfwick, when the terrible apprehensions of a new war, made us and the Dutch run into the measures of the Partition Treaty, which was believed might be a wonderful preservative against a war, but in effect, proved the source, and the chief occasion of it. We here, the States may be sure, shall not be fond to engage in a new war, who feel the effects of one at present in our bowels; let us, therefore, keep to our old maxims, and unite strongly together. The way to avoid a war, is not to be much afraid of one, and to form such an union among the allies, as to let the French see, that if they have a mind to fall out with one of us, they will certainly bring all the rest into the quarrel."

to the Hague, under the direction of Chateaufort, the French ambassador, who was hostile to the whole transaction.

Chapter 14.

1716.

Horace Walpole, as minister from England, conducted the business with great ability. He counteracted the intrigues of Chateaufort, and threw a momentary spirit into the weak and wavering counsels of the Dutch republic. He saw and appreciated the advantages which would result from an alliance with France, in insuring domestic security and foreign tranquillity. He was apprehensive lest the insidious conduct of the regent might so far excite a just, though imprudent indignation in the king and ministry, as to induce them to reject all overtures of accommodation with France, and laboured incessantly to avert what he justly considered so great an evil *.

In a conference with pensionary Heinsius, of which Horace Walpole gives an account in a private letter to Lord Townshend, he details, in a few words, the advantages which would result to the king and nation, from an alliance with France †.

* "If I may venture to give your lordship my own sentiments upon this matter, it is very natural to think that France has two views in her present conduct; 1st, if the regent should propose to enter into new engagements with his majesty, and the States, and they should accept of his proposal, and make a treaty with him, he may design by that means to amuse and disarm them, and thereby have a better opportunity to attack either; or 2^d, if the regent's offers of this nature should be rejected, he may hope to take an advantage of such a refusal, and to insinuate, both in England and Holland, that his majesty has a design to keep his forces on foot; and to quarrel with France; by not forgetting what is past, nor being willing to come to a better understanding with the regent; and if such a notion should once take place, it would have a very ill effect in both countries; but to disappoint France in these two views, may it not be advisable not to talk directly against an alliance with France, to prevent further mischiefs, at least no further than to show how necessary it is, after the regent's late conduct, to conclude the defensive treaty with the Emperor, preferable to any other whatsoever, since it cannot be expected that his majesty should seek the friendship and confidence of France, after the usage he has received from her; and if the regent should make any proposition for an alliance with his majesty, and the States, it may be so far received as to have it leisurely con-

sidered, and his majesty has reason and right enough to insist upon some certain articles to be made part of that treaty, which, if accepted and executed, may put us out of all apprehensions of the Pretender; and if rejected, will expose the regent's ill designs to all the world. In the mean time, I suppose, that the defensive alliance with the Emperor should be promoted as much as possible, and a force by sea and land, sufficient for our security, be kept up. For as of one side we must take care of not being duped by France, we must on the other avoid being thought desirous of a quarrel, and irreconcilable, even for our own security, and the preservation of the peace."

† "The present situation of affairs in England can by no means be agreeable to him. On one hand, it can't be safe or prudent for his majesty to break his troops and disarm himself, until he has reason to believe, that France has abandoned the cause of the Pretender; on the other side the people of England may grow uneasy at the burthen and expense of a standing army; so that it is certainly the intent both of his majesty and his ministry, to have a friendship and confidence with France, that by having nothing to apprehend from thence, the government may return to its natural constitution of guards and garrisons, and enjoying perfect ease and repose; and I added, that it is evident, by his majesty's whole conduct, that he has done all that is possible for him to gain the regent's amity and good will."

Period II.

1714 to 1720.

Conclusion
of the al-
liance with
France.

August 21.

Townshend had previously adopted the same sentiments; and it was in a great measure owing to his suggestions, that the British cabinet opened a negotiation for a defensive alliance with France. But the deceitful behaviour of Chateauneuf, and the dilatory proceedings of the Dutch, enforced the necessity of more expeditious and decisive measures. Lord Stair dexterously counteracted the intrigues of the French ministers at Paris, by contriving to place the negotiation in the hands of the abbe du Bois, who repaired to Hanover, where the business was carried on by secretary Stanhope under the immediate auspices of the king. The negotiation was conducted with such secrecy and dispatch, that an interval of a few days only elapsed between the arrival of du Bois, and the adjustment of the preliminaries*.

After a few conferences, Du Bois agreed, in the name of the regent, to send the Pretender beyond the Alps, and to demolish the port of Mardyke†, called by Lord Townshend, in a letter to Horace Walpole, "that terrible thorn in the side of England," on condition of confirming the article in the treaty of Utrecht, which guaranteed the succession of the crown of France to the house of Orleans, should Louis the Fifteenth die without issue.

* Correspondence, Period II.

† One of the articles in the treaty of Utrecht, expressly stipulated the demolition of Dunkirk, from which port the trade of England and Holland had been incommoded during the late war. The king of France had literally fulfilled this article; but had, at the same time, opened a new canal at Mardyke, which would have been equally prejudicial to the trade of Great Britain. Prior, at that time ambassador at Paris, was ordered to present a memorial, pressing the performance of the 9th article of the treaty of Utrecht. The king of France declared in express terms, that Mardyke was not Dunkirk, and that the treaty of Utrecht did not deprive him of the natural right of a sovereign; to construct such works as he should judge most proper for the preservation of his subjects. The truth is, that the English plenipotentiaries had been extremely negligent; in stipulating the demolition of Dunkirk, it could not be their intention that

another and a better harbour should be made on the same coast: But that stipulation should have been inserted; and it was natural that all advantages should be taken by the French, on whom such articles were imposed; and according to Lord Stair §, Prior, ambassador at Paris, seemed altogether unknowing as to the affair of Mardyke; to have had no instructions while the canal was making; and to have concerned himself no farther about it, since he delivered the memorials. The earl of Stair prosecuted the affair with greater zeal and vigour; it now became an object of importance, and lord Townshend observes to Horace Walpole, "The article of Mardyke is in truth the chief and most essential point for the interest of England, for which his majesty has occasion to desire this alliance."

July 31st.

† Tindal, vol. 18. p. 327. 331.

§ Hardwicke's State Papers, vol. 2. p. 518.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH:

1716.

Situation of Affairs at Home.—Conduct of the Prince of Wales.—Precarious and perplexed Situation of Townshend and Walpole.—Departure of Sunderland.—Causes of the King's Displeasure against Townshend and Walpole.—Their Opposition to his continental Politics.—Walpole's Resistance to the Payment of the German Troops.—Intrigues and Arrogance of the Hanoverian Ministers.—Sunderland arrives at Hanover.—Cabals with the German Junto.—Gains Stanhope.—Prevails on the King to dismiss Townshend.

WHILE Townshend was thus successfully employed in restoring consequence and dignity to the British negotiations abroad, and in securing tranquillity at home; while Walpole was conducting the affairs of finance with wisdom and ability, and laying a plan to reduce the interest of the national debt, an active cabal was undermining the favour of the brother ministers; advantage was taken of the king's proneness to jealousy; every engine was employed against them at Hanover; and after a short, but manly struggle, Townshend was dismissed, and Walpole resigned his employment.

This change in the administration, was derived from the misunderstanding between the king and the prince of Wales; the opposition of the cabinet to some of the plans of continental politics proposed at Hanover; the intrigues and arrogance of the Hanoverian junto; and the cabals of Sunderland and Stanhope.

On the king's departure, the prince of Wales had assumed the internal administration of affairs, and such part of foreign transactions as could not be carried on at Hanover. The rebellion having been suppressed, and tranquillity restored, the people became gradually more and more satisfied with the new government. The king's enemies imputed this satisfaction, which was the natural consequence of events, to the good conduct of the prince, and likewise affected to spread abroad, that many acts of grace, the opening of the communication from Dover to Calais, and the dispensing with passports, were owing to the same cause. Reports of his affability and condescension to all persons, without distinction of parties, were circulated, with a mischievous intention to decry the coldness and reserve of the king; and his

Causes of the change in administration.

Conduct of the prince of Wales.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

his partial acquaintance with the English tongue, was magnified, and represented as a proof of his earnest desire to accommodate himself to the customs of the nation. He increased his popularity by a short progress into Kent, Suffex, and Hampshire, and addresses were preparing in several places, extolling his wisdom in the administration of affairs, and the graciousness of his manners *. These, and other circumstances, together with the extreme popularity † of the prince of Wales, were not concealed from the king, and could not fail to augment the disgust he had already entertained against his son. The prince still farther offended the king, by shewing particular attention to the duke of Argyle; by his reserve to the ministers in England, and by the court which he paid to the Tories.

While the ministers were thus exposed to the resentment of the prince, for their superior attachment to his father, rumours were circulated that their favour was declining with the king. In several letters to Stanhope, Walpole bitterly complains of their irksome situation; and, in the extremity of his chagrin, compares himself and his colleagues, to galley slaves, chained to the oar ‡. In this uneasy situation, they judged it necessary for the king's service, to remove the prejudices, and to acquire the confidence of the prince, which their prudence and address had no sooner effected, by destroying the credit of Argyle, than they awakened the suspicions of the king, who was feelingly alive to sentiments of jealousy towards his son.

Opposition to
continental
politics.

Another cause of the king's displeasure was, the opposition of the cabinet to the continental politics, and their unwillingness to plunge the country into a war with Russia. A dispute had arisen between the duke and nobles of Mecklenburgh, in which the duke was supported by Peter the Great; the nobles by the Emperor, the king of Prussia, and George the First, as elector of Hanover. George was influenced by Bernsdorf, who, being a noble of that duchy, was irritated against the Czar. Though these potentates embraced contrary sides, their views were the same, the possession of the duke's territories.

Those who indiscriminately censure the conduct of Walpole, have not scrupled to assert, that he embarked in every scheme of aggrandizement which interest or ambition might suggest to the sovereign: on the contrary, in this affair, he and Townshend displayed that manly resistance which does honour to their character, and refutes such groundless accusation. In the course of this quarrel, Bernsdorf proposed to Stanhope the wild and daring project of seizing the ships, disarming the forces of the Czar, by means

* Tindal, vol. 19. p. 33. 38.

† Political State of Great Britain, vol. 12. p. 140.

‡ See Correspondence, Period II.

of the Danes, and arresting and detaining his person until his troops should evacuate Denmark and Germany. Townshend reprobated, in the strongest terms, this violent proposal; represented that the prosecution of the war in the north, would be the ruin of England, declared that parliament could not be induced to sanction such a profusion of the public money, for purposes foreign to her real interests; recommended a peace with Sweden, and strongly urged the necessity of obtaining that blessing by some equivalent restitutions. The freedom of remonstrance used on this occasion, incensed the king, who declared that he considered his dearest interests sacrificed to the parsimony of the English ministry. His resentment was still farther inflamed against Walpole, by his declaration of the impracticability of replacing the money advanced for the pay of the troops of Munster and Saxe-Gotha, till the receipt of the sums appropriated by parliament to that use. The anger of the king rose so high, that Walpole was reproached with having broken his promise; the minister vindicated himself with becoming spirit, and declared, that though he could not venture to contradict the king's assertion, yet, that if he had ever made such a promise, it had escaped his memory.

The rapacity and ambition of the German favourites had received several checks from the spirit and inflexibility of Townshend and Walpole; they had hoped to appropriate to themselves large sums from the grant of the French lands in the island of St. Christopher, ceded at the peace, and the duchess of Munster had engaged for a sum of money to procure a peerage for Sir Richard Child, a violent Tory. Both these measures were counteracted, to the great mortification of the whole junto. The haughty and interested mistresses, accustomed to domineer over the ministers of the electorate, could ill brook to be thwarted by the English cabinet. Robethon displayed his resentment by the most insolent demands, and petulant reproofs.*

When the earl of Sunderland arrived at Gohre, although he had already secured the powerful aid of the Hanoverian junto, by the promise of obtaining a repeal of the disqualifying clause in the act of settlement, yet his intrigues had no other chance of being attended with success, unless he could gain secretary Stanhope, who owed his appointment solely to the influence of Townshend, and the friendship of the Walpoles, and possessed their implicit confidence. As Townshend himself, on account of his wife's pregnancy, declined going to Hanover, his colleague was to be entrusted with that important service; he was to keep the king steady to his ministers in England, and to watch and baffle the intrigues which might be formed to remove

Chapter 15.

1716.

Influence of
the Germans.Arrival and
intrigues of
Sunderland,
at Hanover.
October 22.Gains Stan-
hope.

* See Correspondence, Period II. *passim*. Political State of Great Britain, vol. 13. p. 477.

thema.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

them. Stanhope appeared peculiarly qualified for this task. A long and intimate connection with Walpole, had bound them in the strictest ties of friendship, and when Walpole recommended him to Townshend, he answered for his integrity, as for his own. Stanhope himself had made no application for the office of secretary. His frequent residence in camps, and skill in the profession of arms, rendered him, in his own opinion, more fit for a military than a civil station; and when Walpole proposed it, he considered the offer as a matter of raillery, and applied his hand to his sword*. It was not till after much persuasion, and the most solemn assurances, that his compliance would materially contribute to the security of the new administration, that he was induced to accept the post.

One of the principal charges which Stanhope had received from his friends in England, was to be on his guard against the intrigues of Sunderland; who had, under pretence of ill health, obtained the king's permission to go to Aix-la-Chapelle. Although, at the time of his departure, he had given the most positive assurances of repentance and concern, for his late endeavours to remove his colleagues, and after the most solemn professions of friendship and union, had condescended to ask their advice for the regulation of his conduct at Hanover, to which place he intended to apply for leave to proceed. Townshend and Walpole suspected his sincerity; they had experienced his abilities; they knew his ambition, and they dreaded the ascendancy which he might obtain, through the channel of the Hanoverians, over the king. But they implicitly trusted in the sagacity and integrity of Stanhope, either to prevent his appearance at Hanover, or, if he came, to counteract his views. Stanhope, however, did not follow their directions, for when Sunderland demanded access to the king, instead of opposing, he promoted the request with all his influence†.

The mode of correspondence adopted, during his continuance at Hanover, sufficiently proved the unbounded confidence placed in Stanhope. Walpole wrote in his own hand, occasional letters of the most private nature, in which he represented the internal state of affairs, the behaviour of the prince, the sentiments of individuals, and the conduct of Bothmar and other persons who were caballing against them. In addition to this mode of communication, Stephen Poyntz, the confidential secretary of lord Townshend, was appointed a supernumary clerk in the secretary of state's office. His principal employment was to lay before Stanhope such occurrences and observations as Townshend and Methuen, who acted as secretary of state during the absence of

* From Lord Orford.

† See Correspondence.—September 8th, Period II.

Stanhope,

Stanhope, thought improper to be inserted in their public dispatches. He was never to write but through the channel of a messenger, and Stanhope was requested to communicate these letters to the king, under the strongest injunctions of secrecy, or to withhold them at discretion. With the same precautions, and by the same conveyance, Stanhope was to send, under cover to Poyntz, such particulars as the king might judge improper and inconvenient to be laid before the prince, or the cabinet council *.

In this confidential correspondence, Townshend and Walpole stated freely their objections to the continental politics, declared their dissatisfaction at the interference of the Hanoverians, and their contempt at their venal and interested conduct. They therefore put it in his power to betray their private sentiments, and to increase the aversion of the Hanoverian junto. The seduction therefore of Stanhope from his former friends, was a master-piece of art, as the defection of the person in whom they placed the most implicit confidence, rendered every attempt to baffle the efforts of Sunderland ineffectual, because the mine was not discovered until it was sprung.

At what precise period, or by what inducement Stanhope was gained by Sunderland, cannot be positively ascertained; but from the general disinterestedness of his character, I am led to conclude, that he did not lightly betray his friends, or yield to the suggestions of Sunderland from venal or ambitious motives. The private information I have received, and the letters which passed between Stanhope and Walpole, seem to prove, that Sunderland had convinced him, that the English cabinet were secretly counteracting the conclusion of the alliance with France, that their opposition to the northern transactions was a dereliction of the principles on which the revolution was founded; and he was made to believe that his friend Walpole had broke his word with the king in the affair of the Munster and Saxe Gotha troops.

This coolness of Stanhope towards the two ministers was still further augmented by the transactions in Holland, and the conduct of Horace Walpole, whose frank and open character scorned to disguise his sentiments, and refused to follow orders which he considered as repugnant to honour and plain dealing. He had censured the proceedings at Hanover, in regard to the politics of the north, in terms still stronger than those used by Townshend. He lamented that the whole system of affairs in Europe, should be entirely subverted on account of Mecklenburgh. To Horace Walpole had been intrusted the secret negotiation of the defensive treaty with France, and while it was carrying on, the strictest secrecy was enjoined. Afterwards it was thought prudent to remove the negotiation to Hanover, where, as has been

* Poyntz to secretary Stanhope, 1716. Correspondence, Period II.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

already observed, it was conducted by secretary Stanhope himself, and Du Bois, and the proceedings communicated to Horace Walpole. During its progress he had solemnly assured the pensionary and greffier, that no treaty would be concluded separately from the Dutch; but the urgency of affairs, and the king's impatience to settle the preliminaries before the regent of France could avail himself of the dissensions with Russia to support the Czar in the affair of Mecklenburgh, rendered it impolitic to wait for the dilatory proceedings of the Dutch republic, and full powers were therefore forwarded to him and lord Cadogan, as joint plenipotentiaries at the Hague, to sign the treaty with Du Bois, without farther delay. On the receipt of these orders, Horace Walpole earnestly exhorted Sunderland and Stanhope at the Hague, to intercede with the king to dispense with his signing the treaty, and requested lord Townshend to obtain permission of the prince of Wales for his return to England, under pretence of ill health. He declared, in the most positive and unequivocal manner, that no consideration on earth should induce him to comply; that he would relinquish all present and future advantages, and lay his life at the king's feet, rather than be guilty of so nefarious an action. These repeated remonstrances had their effect, and permission was at length granted from Hanover, that he might depart, and leave to Cadogan the signature of the treaty.

During his residence at Gohre, Sunderland received many marks of favour, and by his consummate address soon acquired the full confidence of the king. He found it no difficult matter to select, from the numerous transactions in which Townshend had been employed, some apparent instances of disrespect, or of neglect in his department. But it is remarkable, that notwithstanding the known zeal of Townshend for the French treaty, that although he was the original adviser and promoter of it, and had gradually surmounted the indifference of the king*, the opposition of Sunderland, the disapprobation of Stanhope, and the objections of the Hanoverian ministers, yet it was now alledged as a crime against him, that he had purposely delayed its signature. This extraordinary imputation was conveyed to him in letters from the king, Stanhope, and Sunderland. The letter from the king is missing, but that of Sunderland † will give a striking proof of the influence he had already gained over his master, and the imperiousness of his character, when he delivered his censures in so harsh and authoritative a manner to the prime minister in England.

While the answer to the charge was expected at Hanover, Sunderland

* Lord Townshend's letter to the king.

† Correspondence, Period II, November 11.

urged

urged another subject of complaint, which made a still greater impression on the king, and contributed to the successful issue of his intrigues. He availed himself, with great address, of the misunderstanding with the prince of Wales. He insinuated to the king, that Townshend and Walpole were caballing with the duke of Argyle and the earl of Hly; that their repeated remonstrances to draw him from Hanover, were only so many feints to cover their own insidious designs; that their great object was to detain him abroad; and by urging the necessity of transacting the public business, to induce him to invest the prince of Wales with fuller powers, and enable him to open the parliament, and to obtain an increased, permanent, and independent interest. The effect of these representations was aided by the anxious solicitude which the prince discovered, on all occasions, to open the parliament in person, and by his imprudence in pressing Stanhope, by means of a letter from Townshend, to obtain a speedy answer, announcing the king's definitive resolutions.

When these insinuations, seconded by the Hanoverian mistresses and ministers, had made a deep impression, with a view to obtain a satisfactory proof of these intentions, Sunderland advised the king to demand of the cabinet council, the heads of the business to be brought forward in the next session; and to declare that he was desirous of passing the winter at Hanover, if any expedient could be adopted for summoning the parliament, and transacting affairs. This demand being forwarded to the minister, the council instantly deliberated on the message, and Townshend, anxious to gratify the inclination of the king, transmitted a favourable answer, by his confidential friend and brother-in-law Horace Walpole, who had just arrived from the Hague. He was so anxious to convey this dispatch with all possible speed, that he quitted London on the 13th of November, the evening of its signature, left the Hague on the 17th, and, travelling night and day, arrived at Gohre on the 22d. He flattered himself with a favourable reception, as the messenger of good tidings, but found the state of affairs far different from that which his sanguine expectations had suggested.

He found the king devoted to Sunderland, and exasperated against his brother and Townshend, to whom the letters on the delay in signing the French treaty, expressive of his high indignation, had just been forwarded. He found him still greatly dissatisfied with their opposition to the plan of northern politics, and disgusted with the backwardness of Walpole to advance the subsidies for his troops of Saxe Gotha and Munster, and so strongly

* Correspondence.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

impressed with the danger of permitting the prince of Wales to open the parliament in person, as to declare that no consideration should induce him to consent to the grant of discretionary powers for that purpose. He found Stanhope displeased with the conduct of Townshend, and convinced that his negotiations for the peace with France, and for the operations in the north, were counteracted by the English cabinet.

The frankness and warmth of his temper, impelled him without disguise to speak plain truths, and to expostulate with a manly freedom and dignified spirit which astounded Sunderland, and disconcerted Stanhope. He reminded Stanhope in particular, that he owed his high situation to Townshend and his brother; he remonstrated with him for having concurred with their enemies, and affirmed that the suspicions he had entertained against Townshend were totally groundless. He candidly avowed, that if blame was incurred by any delay of signing the treaty with France, that blame must attach solely to him, whose delicacy prevented him from affixing his name to an act, after he had solemnly assured the leading men in Holland, that England would not conclude a separate treaty. He finally answered for the honour and friendship of the brother ministers in England.

Stanhope, affected with these remonstrances, so forcibly urged by his friend, acknowledged that he had been deceived by false suggestions; spoke of Townshend and Walpole in terms of praise and affection; expressed a high sense of his obligations to them; requested that what was past might be forgotten, and what was to come might be improved; and promised in the most solemn manner to use his influence with the king, which he represented as very considerable, in favour of those who had committed to him his present trust. Horace Walpole was fully satisfied with these declarations. Stanhope seemed to act in conformity with his promises, and to labour to efface the ill impressions which the king had entertained of his ministers in England. Sunderland appeared confounded; the Hanoverians abashed; and the king inclined to recover his former satisfaction and complacency.

While these favourable symptoms of returning good will and harmony apparently prevailed, the answer of Townshend to the charges of delaying the signature to the French treaty, arrived at Gohre. To Sunderland's insolent reproofs he did not condescend to make any reply; to Stanhope he wrote only a few lines, testifying his concern and indignation at being betrayed by one in whom he placed the most implicit confidence; but his answer to the king*, contained a full and dignified refutation of the malicious calumnies and misrepresentations of his enemies; and was written in a style

Townshend
justifies him-
self.

* November 11. See Correspondence, Period II.

and

and manner, expressing without disguise the high opinion which he entertained of his own character.

This manly and spirited letter appeared to have its due effect. The king, convinced that he had hastily and unjustly accused lord Townshend, candidly acknowledged his mistake. Stanhope, highly affected with a letter from his friend Walpole, justifying himself and Townshend from the malicious imputations laid to their charge, renewed his protestations of gratitude and devotion, and requested the interference of Horace Walpole to bring about a thorough reconciliation, and to re-establish the former harmony and good understanding. The king commissioned him to convey the strongest assurances of restored confidence in his faithful counsellors in England; and Horace Walpole quitted Gohre with a full conviction that all resentment had totally subsided, and that Stanhope was sincere; and he was as anxious to return to England with the good tidings, as he had been eager to repair to Hanover with the letter from the cabinet council.

His journey being somewhat retarded by unforeseen accidents on the road, and by the difficulty of crossing Maesland Sluys, he did not arrive in London till the 11th of December. He instantly executed his commission; delivered to Townshend and his brother Stanhope's letter, containing the strongest assurances of devotion and friendship; announced the king's favourable declarations; reconciled all parties, and re-established, as he thought, the most perfect harmony and good understanding in the cabinet. But he had scarcely effected this happy reconciliation, before dispatches were brought from Stanhope, announcing the king's command to remove Townshend from the office of secretary of state, and to offer him the lord lieutenantcy of Ireland. As Brereton, who conveyed these dispatches without being apprised of their contents, could not have quitted Gohre more than three days subsequent to the departure of Horace Walpole, it was obvious that he had been duped and deceived, that the plan for the removal of Townshend had been then settled; and that the solemn promises, made by Stanhope, were never intended to be fulfilled. A letter from Sunderland to one of his friends, of the same date with those that brought the dismissal of Townshend, fully proved the motives which had influenced the king to countenance this proceeding. It accused Townshend, Walpole, and the chancellor, of caballing with the prince of Wales and Argyle, and forming designs against the king's authority*. In fact, the letter from the cabinet council, which Horace Walpole had conveyed to Gohre, was the death warrant of Townshend's.

Chapter 15.

1716.

Removal of
Townshend.

* See Townshend's letter to Slingelandt, January 7th, 1717. Correspondence.

hend's.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

hend's administration. It contained many expressions and opinions highly unfavourable to the sentiments and inclinations of the king, and wholly opposite to the views of the Hanoverian junto. By the demand, that full and discretionary powers should be sent to the prince of Wales, it confirmed the opinion suggested by lord Sunderland, that the object of the ministers in England, was to exalt the son above the father, and to shew that the business of parliament could be transacted by the prince of Wales. It irritated the king to such a degree, that the immediate removal of the minister would have been the inevitable consequence, had not the presence of Horace Walpole, and his expostulations with Stanhope, disconcerted, for a short time, the plans of Sunderland. But the favourable impressions which his representations and the manly reply of Townshend had effected, were soon worn off by the suggestions of the Hanoverian junto; the king's jealousy again returned with redoubled force, and Townshend was dismissed.

Townshend declines the lord lieutenancy, Dec. 11.
His letter to the king.

Townshend received the unexpected account of his dismissal with no less surprise than indignation. In his letter to the king, he announced his resolution to decline the offer of the lord lieutenancy, with great dignity and spirit.

" * I have received with deference, and with the utmost submission, your majesty's commands, intimated by M. secretary Methuen, depriving me of the office of secretary of state. I most humbly demand permission to remind your majesty of what I said, when you did me the honour to confer on me that employment; that I should esteem myself happy, if I had as much capacity as zeal and affection for your majesty's service, in which case I am sure that your majesty would have every reason to be satisfied with my services. I can venture to affirm with truth, that the desire of testifying my gratitude has been the only motive capable of hitherto supporting me under the fatigues of my employment. I am highly sensible of the honour which your majesty confers on me, by condescending to appoint me lord lieutenant of Ireland: But as my domestic affairs do not permit me to reside out of England, I should hold myself to be totally unworthy of the choice which your majesty has been pleased to make, if I were capable of enjoying the large appointments annexed to that honourable office, without doing the duty of it. I trust that your majesty will grant me the permission to attend to the private affairs of my family, which I have too much neglected. Yet I will venture to assure your majesty, that whatever may be my situation, your majesty will always find me a faithful and grateful servant, anxious to promote, with all his power, your majesty's service; having the honour of being, with

* Townshend Papers.—See the French letter, of which this is the original draught, in the Correspondence.

the most inviolable attachment, sire, your majesty's most humble, most obedient, and most faithful subject and servant."

In a short letter to Stanhope, Townshend calmly reproached him for the duplicity of his conduct, and particularly dwelt on the violation of the promises which he had made to Horace Walpole. But Stanhope had to encounter the still severer reproaches from his confidential friend, Walpole. To him he opened himself in a private letter, which was delivered twenty-four hours before that which announced the dismissal of Townshend. In this apology he was extremely anxious to justify his conduct, and to attribute his acquiescence to the positive commands of the king, who bitterly complained of the warmth and impracticability of Townshend's temper and manner, and he imputed solely to his influence, that the disgrace of the minister was softened by the offer of the lord lieutenancy. He took merit to himself for having removed the prejudices which the king had entertained against Walpole, and earnestly exhorted him to employ his interest with lord Townshend to accept the proffered dignity. The reader will find, in the correspondence, this specious justification of his conduct, and the reproachful answers of Walpole, who after complaining of the hardship with which Townshend was treated, observed, that it was still more unjust to load him with false imputations to justify such ill treatment, and concluded with expressing his resolution to act invariably with him.

Chapter 16.
1716 to 1717.

Walpole reproaches Stanhope.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH:

1716—1717.

Discontents in England and Holland at the Disgrace of Townshend.—Sunderland and Stanhope, and the Hanoverians, are alarmed.—Apologize for their Conduct.—The King prevails upon him to accept the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland.—Motives for his Conduct.—Townshend and Walpole coldly support Government.—Sunderland increases his Party.—Townshend dismissed from the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland.—Walpole proposes and carries his Scheme for reducing the Interest of the National Debt.—Resigns.—Many of the leading Whigs follow his Example.—Weakness of the new Administration.

THE precipitate manner in which Townshend was removed from the office of secretary of state, was occasioned by a violent burst of resentment and jealousy in the king. But as soon as the first emotions of anger had subsided,

Alarms on dismissal of Townshend.

Period II.
1714 to 1720

subsided, and the first raptures of triumph among those who had obtained his disgrace had given way to sober and serious reflection, the whole body began to be alarmed at the fatal consequences which seemed likely to ensue from that event.

In England.

Reports were transmitted from England, that these measures had excited very serious discontents and mistrusts amongst the monied men in the city; that the greater part of the Whigs were highly exasperated; that of the cabinet council, Devonshire, Orford, Cowper, Walpole, and Methuen adhered inviolably to the fallen minister, and that their secession might create a dangerous division, and distract the plans already concerted for the ensuing session. But above all considerations they dreaded the opposition of Walpole, who took a principal lead in the house of commons; and whose ability for the affairs of finance was so well understood, as to render it difficult to supply his place at the head of the treasury at this particular juncture, when he was forming a scheme, which had been highly applauded by the king, for reducing the interest of the national debt.

In Holland.

These apprehensions were not confined to England, but extended to foreign parts, and particularly Holland. Many calumnious imputations having been insinuated by Sunderland and the Hanoverians, Townshend wrote a full and spirited justification of his and Walpole's conduct, and detailed the real motives which had occasioned their disgrace, in a letter* to his confidential friend, Slingelandt, afterwards pensionary of Holland; who strongly expressed regret at his dismissal, and concern at his refusal to accept the lord lieutenancy of Ireland.

This letter had a very striking effect over his friends in Holland. Pensionary Heinsius, Fagel, Slingelandt, Duvenvoirde, and other leading men in that republic, expressed the most serious concern at the fatal consequences which might result to the united interests of the two countries from this fatal division; and reprobated a measure, which, according to their opinion, was calculated to make the crown totter on the head of the king. The opinion of these men, warmly attached to the English interest, had great weight with George the First, during the short time which he passed at the Hague, on his return to England.

Apprehensions of Sunderland and Stanhope.

The terror of Sunderland and Stanhope on this occasion, is fully proved by the extraordinary attention they now paid to Townshend and Walpole. Sunderland apologized for having accused them of caballing with the duke of Argyle; and acknowledged that the report had originated from a misrepresentation of Lord Cadogan, whose hasty temper was well known. He ex-

* Correspondence.

pressed his regret and repentance for having written an insolent letter* to the earl of Orford, in which he had insulted the cabinet ministers who adhered to Townshend. Both he and Stanhope vied in making the most artful excuses for their past conduct; declared that they did not in the smallest degree contribute to his disgrace, and threw the whole blame on the Hanoverians. They finally expatiated on the danger to the true Whig interest, if Townshend now deserted his tried friends. Stanhope wrote in the strongest manner to Walpole, and used every argument to appease his resentment. He renewed his asseverations, that the removal of the minister was the sole determination of his royal master, pronounced it an impossible attempt to think of persuading the king to recall his commands; expressed his apprehensions of the dangerous consequences, if Walpole and the other leaders of the Whigs should deem it necessary to resign; and repeated his earnest entreaties to prevent things from being carried to such extremities as he dreaded to think of. He exhorted Methuen, who declared his resolution of acting with Walpole, not to desert the good cause; and throw the king into the hands of the Tories; but solicited his humble interposition with Townshend and Walpole: "They may possibly," he added, "unking their master, or (what I do before God think very possible) make him abdicate; but they will never force him to make Townshend secretary †." On their arrival in England, they acted in the same abject manner, and continued to make the most humble submission.

Chapter 16.
1716 to 1717.

The king himself treated Townshend with the most flattering marks of distinction. He apologized in person for the precipitation with which he had deprived him of the seals, and acknowledged that he had been imposed upon by false reports; he sent Bernsdorf to represent the fatal effects which would be derived from his opposition at this period. That artful minister offered him, in his master's name, a restoration to his former favour, and every satisfaction which he could desire; declared that the king having taken from him the seals, could not immediately restore them consistently with his own honour; promised that no other changes should be made; intreated him to accept the proffered dignity. He assured him that he might consider that office only as a temporary post, and be permitted to resign it at pleasure, in exchange for any other he should prefer ‡.

Conduct of
the king.
1717.

As it was impossible, after the insolent letters of Sunderland, and the insidious conduct of Stanhope, that he could ever repose any confidence in those who had thus insulted and deceived him, he would have acted a nobler

Townshend
accepts the
lord lieutenancy.

* See letter from M. Duvenvoirde to Lord Townshend.—Correspondence.

† Letter from Stanhope to Methuen.—Correspondence.

‡ Duvenvoirde to Lord Townshend.—Correspondence.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

and a wiser part, had he declined accepting any office. Had he persisted in his refusal of the lord lieutenancy, had Walpole, Devonshire, Orford, Cowper, Methuen, and Pulteney, instantly resigned on his dismissal, the party of Sunderland was so weak and insufficient, that he could not have obtained a majority in parliament. But Townshend, mollified by the solicitations of the king, overcome by the importunities of his friends in Holland, and dreading the consequences of a disunion of the Whigs at this moment, when an invasion from Sweden was threatened, at length accepted the vice-royalty, and remaining in England, assisted at the deliberations of the cabinet. All the friends of Townshend were suffered to continue in their places. Methuen, who had acted as secretary of state during the absence of Stanhope, now succeeded to the southern department. Walpole remained at the head of the treasury: and the great body of the Whigs still appeared to act with union and cordiality.

Proceedings
in parliament.

Feb. 21.
March 4.

In consequence of this apparent amity, the opposition in the commons was so trifling, that the address, thanking the king for laying before the house the paper proving the projected invasion from Sweden, passed unanimously*; and when the estimates relating to the land forces were presented, the motion for putting off the consideration, was carried by a triumphant majority of 222 voices against 57†.

Fresh divisions.

But the good understanding between the different members of administration, did not long continue. It soon appeared, that the king's promises of favour, made by Bernsdorf to Townshend and Walpole, were not fulfilled; and that the king placed his chief confidence in Sunderland and Stanhope. New divisions took place; Townshend and Walpole continued to defend the measures of government, but their support was cold and formal, and so different from their former zeal, as plainly shewed extreme dissatisfaction. Sunderland had now considerably increased his party, and thought himself sufficiently strong to carry on the public business, and defy the opposition. In this situation, an open rupture in the cabinet was unavoidable. The first public symptoms of this difference appeared in the house of commons. On a motion that a supply be granted to enable the king to concert such measures with foreign princes and states, as may prevent any apprehensions from the designs of Sweden for the future: Walpole, who on all such occasions used to give a great bias to the house, maintained a profound silence, and the resolution was carried by a majority of only 4 voices‡.

9th.

As it was evident that this mode of inimical proceeding originated from

* Journals.—Chandler.

† Chandler.

‡ Journals.

the party of which Townshend was leader, he received, on the same evening, a letter from Stanhope, announcing his dismissal.

The king himself so highly appreciated the services and talents of Walpole, that he dreaded his resignation, and was persuaded to remove Townshend, under the belief that he would still remain at the head of the treasury. When Walpole, therefore, on the following morning, requested an audience, and gave up the seals, the king was extremely surprised. He refused to accept his resignation, expressed a high sense of his services in the kindest and strongest terms; declared that he had no thoughts of parting with so faithful a counsellor; intreated him not to retire, and replaced the seals in his hat. To this Walpole replied, with no less concern than firmness, that however well inclined he might be to obey his majesty's commands, yet it would be impossible to serve him faithfully with those ministers to whom he had lately given his favour, "They will propose to me," he said, "both as chancellor of the exchequer, and in parliament, such things, that if I agree to support them, my credit and reputation will be lost; and if I disapprove or oppose them, I must forfeit your majesty's favour. For I, in my station, though not the author, must be answerable to my king and to my country for all the measures which may be adopted by administration." At the conclusion of these words, he again laid the seals upon the table; the king returned them not less than ten times, and when the minister as often replaced them on the table, he gave up the struggle, and reluctantly accepted his resignation, expressing great concern and much resentment at his determined perseverance. At the conclusion of this affecting scene, Walpole came into the adjoining apartment, and those who were present, witnessed the anguish of his countenance, and observed that his eyes were suffused with tears. Those who immediately entered into the closet, found the king no less disturbed and agitated*.

These removals were soon followed by an almost total change in the administration. Devonshire, Orford, Methuen, and Pulteney, resigned; Stanhope was appointed first lord of the treasury, and chancellor of the exchequer; Sunderland and Addison secretaries of state; the duke of Bolton lord lieutenant of Ireland, and the duke of Newcastle lord chamberlain; the earl of Berkley first lord of the admiralty, and the duke of Kingston retained the office of privy seal, to which he had been nominated in the preceding year, on the resignation of Sunderland, who was made treasurer of Ireland for life.

* This interesting anecdote is taken from a letter of Horace Walpole to Etough, dated Woburn, October 12, 1751. See Correspondence.

Chapter 16.

1716 to 1717.

Townshend's
dismissal.Walpole re-
signs.Further
changes.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH:

1717—1719.

Walpole proposes his Plan for reducing the Interest of the National Debt.—His Resignation excites warm Debates.—Altercation with Stanhope.—Remarks on the baneful Spirit of a systematic Opposition to all the Measures of Government.—Walpole not exempted from that Censure.—His uniform Opposition, and Influence in the House of Commons.

Walpole's
scheme for
reducing the
national
debt.

THE resignation of Walpole happened at a time when he was exerting his abilities for finance, in the arrangement of a scheme highly advantageous to the country. When he was first placed at the head of the treasury, the national debt amounted to 50 millions, and although the common interest of money had been reduced in the late reign to 5 per cent. yet the interest of some of the debts were as high as 8, and none lower than 6; so that the average was 7 per cent. The difference between this rate of interest, and that on private mortgages, presented a *real* fund for lessening the public debt.

This debt was considered under two heads; redeemable, and irredeemable. The redeemable, or such debts as had been provided for by parliament with a redeemable interest of so much per cent. the public had a right and power to discharge whenever they were able, either by providing money for such proprietors as insisted upon money, or by offering new terms, in discharge of all former conditions, which, if accepted by the proprietors, was to be deemed an actual redemption of the first debt, as if it had been paid off in ready money. As for the irredeemable debts, or long and short annuities, nothing could be effected without the absolute consent of the proprietors. The only method, therefore, to treat with them, was to offer such conditions as they should deem advantageous.*

Upon these principles Walpole gave the first hint of this great scheme, by proposing to borrow £. 600,000, bearing interest only 4 per cent. and to apply all savings, arising from the intended redemptions, for the purpose of re-

* Tindal, vol. 19. p. 102.

ducing

ducing and discharging the national debt, which was the first resolution ever taken in parliament in order to raise or establish a *general* sinking fund *. When he brought his scheme into the house, the project appeared so well digested and advantageous, that the opposition which had been intended was converted into approbation, and every article was agreed to.

Unfortunately for the completion of this great arrangement, the able projector was no longer in office. On bringing in the bill, Walpole gave a hint that he had resigned his places, by saying, "that he now presented it as a country gentleman, but hoped that it would not fare the worse for having two fathers, and that his successor would take care to bring it to perfection †." The difficulties which he had to encounter in this scheme, will appear from the consideration, that no reduction of interest could be made without the consent of the public creditors themselves. It was solely by his address and management, that the companies of the Bank and South Sea agreed not only to reduce their own interest, but to furnish large sums for the discharge of such other creditors as should refuse to comply with an equal reduction; a striking proof of the general esteem in which he was held by the proprietors of the national debts; of their regard for his judgment, and confidence in his equity.

The resignation of Walpole caused a great sensation in the house of commons, where regret for the want of his talents for finance, seemed to prevail, and he was as much inveighed against for resigning, as he was afterwards reviled for remaining in power. His withdrawing from government at this crisis, was called a defection; a criminal conspiracy, with a view to embarrass the king, and to force him to comply with his unwarrantable demands. In answer to these accusations, Walpole justly observed, "That persons who had accepted places in the government, had often been reflected on for carrying on designs, and acting contrary to the interest of their country; but that he had never heard a man arraigned for laying down one of the most profitable places in the kingdom: that for his own part, if he would have complied with some measures, it had not been in the power of any of the present ministers to remove him; but that he had reasons for resigning his employments, with which he had acquainted his majesty, and might, perhaps, in a proper time, declare them to the house. In the mean while, the tenour of his conduct should shew, that he never intended to make the king uneasy, or to embarrass his affairs ‡."

* Historical Register for 1717, p. 150.—
Some Considerations concerning the Public
Funds, 1735, p. 11.

† Chandler.
‡ Chandler.

Chapter 17.
1717 to 1719.
March 23,
1717.
April 10th.

Defends his
resignation.

But

Period II.
1714 to 1720.
Reflected on
by Stanhope.

But a more serious charge was brought against him by Stanhope, who observed, in the heat of debate, that "he would endeavour to make up by application, honesty, and disinterestedness, what he wanted in abilities and experience. That he would content himself with the salary and lawful perquisites of his office; and, though he had quitted a better place, he would not quarter himself upon any body. That he had no brothers, nor other relations to provide for; and that upon his first entering into the treasury, he had made a standing order against the late practice of granting reversions of places." Walpole, touched with these insinuations, complained in the first place of breach of friendship, and betraying private conversation. He then frankly owned, that while he was in employment, he had endeavoured to serve his friends and relations; than which, in his opinion, nothing was more reasonable and just. "As to the granting of reversions," he added, "I am willing to acquaint the house with the meaning of the charge which is now urged against me. I have no objections to the German ministers, whom the king brought with him from Hanover, and who, as far as I had observed, had behaved themselves like men of honour; but, there is a mean fellow*, of what nation I know not, who is eager to dispose of employments. This man, having obtained the grant of a reversion, which he designed for his son, I thought it too good for him, and therefore reserved it for my own son. On this disappointment, the foreigner was so impertinent as to demand £. 2,500, under pretence that he had been offered that sum for the reversion; but I was wiser than to comply with his demands. And I am bold to acknowledge, one of the chief reasons that made me resign was, because I could not connive at some things that were carrying on †."

Conduct in
opposition.

When Walpole asserted in the house, that he never intended to embarrass the affairs of government, he either was not sincere in his professions, or if he was, did not possess that patriotic and disinterested firmness which could resist the spirit of party; for almost from the moment of his resignation, to his return into office, we find him uniform in his opposition to all the measures of government. We see him leagued with the Tories, and voting with Sir William Wyndham, Bromley, Shippen, and Snell; and we observe, not without regret at the inconsistency of human nature, Shippen expressing his satisfaction, that Walpole, when contending for the service of his country, was no more afraid than himself of being called a Jacobite by those who wanted other arguments to support their debates ‡. We find him even opposing the mutiny bill, that necessary measure for the regulation of

Mutiny bill.

* Alluding to Robethon.

† Chandler.

‡ Chandler, vol. 6. p. 156.

military

military discipline, and in the heat of argument, making use of this memorable expression, "He that is for blood, shall have blood": But though he spoke thus strenuously against the bill, he voted for it, and secured a large majority. Being reproached for this apparent inconsistency, he justified himself by declaring, that although in the debate he was of opinion that mutiny and desertion should be punished by the civil magistrate, yet he was convinced that those crimes should be punished by the martial law, rather than escape with impunity*. We find him taking an active part against the repeal of the occasional and schism bills, notwithstanding his animated declaration, on a former occasion, that the schism bill had more the appearance of a decree of Julian the apostate, than a law enacted by a protestant parliament, since it tended to raise as great a persecution against our protestant brethren, as either the primitive christians ever suffered from the heathen emperors, or the protestants from popery and the inquisition†. In support of the question for reducing the troops, he afforded a striking instance of inconsistency, by enlarging on the common topic of the danger of a standing army in a free nation, and by insisting that 12,000 men were fully sufficient. Yet at this very period, a rebellious spirit continued to subsist in England, and prevailed still more in Scotland. Although the king of Sweden's design to support the Pretender had been discovered, yet he still persisted in his resolution, and waited only for a favourable opportunity of carrying his project into execution. The queen of Spain, and cardinal Alberoni, had revived war in the south of Europe, and were forming vast preparations; and the reception and encouragements given to the adherents of the Pretender, were sure symptoms of their inclinations in his favour. Walpole was well aware of all these circumstances, and could not be ignorant that the reduction of the army must have been attended with fatal consequences, and therefore his support of this measure could be dictated only by party resentment.

We find him, who had spoken with such heat and force of argument against the makers of the peace of Utrecht, who had been the indefatigable chairman of the secret committee, and had drawn up that able report, which brought such heavy accusations against Oxford, now grown languid and lukewarm in the prosecution, absenting‡ himself from the committee so often, that another chairman was chosen in his place, and ironically complimented by Shippen, that he who was the most forward and active in the impeachment, had abated in his warmth since he was out of place§. At length, by

Chapter 17.
1717 to 1719.

Schism bill.

Speaks for
the reduction
of the
army.

Acquittal of
Oxford.

* Hardwicke Papers.

† Chandler, 1712.—Tindal.

‡ Tindal.

§ Chandler.

Period II.

1714 to 1720.

Inquiry into
the conduct
of lord Ca-
dogan.

June 4th.

Influence in
parliament.Supports the
Swedish sub-
sidy.December
4th 1717.

his connivance, a feigned quarrel as to the mode of proceeding took place between the two houses, and no prosecutors appearing on the day fixed for the continuance of the trial, Oxford was unanimously acquitted.

Walpole also, and the Whigs in opposition, whom Shippen humorously called his *new allies*, zealously supported the inquiry into the conduct of lord Cadogan, for fraud in the charge of transporting the Dutch troops, at the time of the rebellion, to and from Great Britain. Walpole spoke in this debate near two hours, and in the course of his speech, strained his voice so high, and used such violent efforts, that the blood burst from his nose, and he was obliged to retire for some time from the house *. In answer to his arguments, it was ably observed by Lechmere, that the inquiry was frivolous, the result of party malice, and of the same nature with those which had been instituted against Marlborough, Townshend, and Walpole himself; and he justly observed, that those persons who were now most zealous about the inquiry, had been silent about these pretended frauds while they were in place. But the advocates for the inquiry were so powerful, that it was negatived only by a majority of 10 voices †.

But whatever were the motives by which Walpole was guided, he considerably influenced the house of commons, during the whole time of his opposition. Three days after his resignation, Stanhope having moved for granting the sum of £. 250,000 to enable the king to concert measures against Sweden; and Pulteney, who had just resigned his place of secretary at war, having spoke with great vehemence against a German ministry, the motion was in great danger of being lost, till Walpole closed the debate, by observing, "That having already spoken in favour of the supply, he should now vote for it;" and the motion, in consequence of his interference, was carried without a division ‡. A few words in favour of Mr. Jackson, who had offended the house by declaring that there were amongst them a set of men who made it their study and business to embarrass the government, saved him from the Tower. And when Shippen said, "the speech from the throne seemed rather calculated for the meridian of Germany, than of Great Britain," and urged, as the only infelicity of his majesty's reign, that he was unacquainted with our language and constitution; a few palliating expressions from Walpole would have been attended with the same effect, if the inflexible orator had not maintained what he had advanced, and by that obstinacy occasioned his own commitment §. Even in the article of supplies, he occasionally prevailed against the ministry. In speaking for the diminution of the army

* Chandler.

† Historical Register.—Chandler.

‡ Historical Register.—Chandler.—Tindal.

§ Chandler, vol. 6. p. 157.

estimates,

estimates, his proposal, that £.650,000, instead of £.681,618, should be granted for defraying the charges of guards and garrisons * was adopted; and in the same session, when the ministry demanded £.130,361, for the pay of reduced officers, and the Tories would only grant £.80,000, Walpole proposed a medium of £.99,000; and his motion was carried without a division.

Chapter 17.
1717 to 1719.

December
9th 1718.

A proposal from the South Sea company, for advancing £.700,000, having been accepted by the house, some of the members were for applying it towards the present and growing necessities of the government. But in a grand committee of ways and means, Walpole, in favour of his sinking fund, insisting that the public debts already incurred should be first considered, a resolution was taken, and a bill afterwards brought in, directing the application of this money, agreeably to his sentiments. "It is indeed plain," adds a virulent pamphleteer, who decried the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, that "in all transactions of money affairs, the house relied more upon his judgment than on that of any other member †."

South Sea
loan applied
to the sinking
fund.

January 12,
1719.

Thus it appears that Walpole, even when in opposition, almost managed the house of commons; and being in opposition he could not gain that ascendancy, by the means of corruption and influence, which were afterwards so repeatedly urged against him, and which the same virulent author calls "some SECRET MAGIC of which he seemed to have been a perfect master." In fact, the magic which he applied, was derived from profound knowledge of finance, great skill in debate, in which perspicuity and sound sense were eminently conspicuous, unimpeached integrity of character, and the assistance of party.

Walpole was no less vehement in his opposition to those measures of government which related to foreign affairs, and which, at this time, embraced a very large field for approbation or censure. The fatal consequences of the peace of Utrecht, placed England in a very delicate situation between the opposite pretensions of Spain and Austria. To satisfy both was impracticable; but the alliance with France, concerted by Walpole and Townshend, and the necessity of opposing the unjust schemes and dangerous intrigues of Cardinal Alberoni, compelled Great Britain to side with the Emperor. Yet though it was generally known that Spain, in concert with Sweden, meditated a descent on our coasts, to overturn the established government, and set the Pretender on the throne; though Philip the Fifth grasped at the pos-

Foreign
transactions.

* Chandler, vol. 6. p. 175.

† History of the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, p. 113.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

cession of Gibraltar and Minorca, and the subversion of the regent's power in France; and the ambition of his consort, Elizabeth Farnese, aimed at the acquisition of the Italian provinces for her son; though a Spanish fleet had been sent into the Mediterranean, and a Spanish army had over-run the kingdom of Sardinia, and threatened the reduction of Sicily, no attempts seem to have been wanting on the side of England, to induce the king of Spain, by persuasions, to adopt pacific measures. Immediate preparations were arranged with the Emperor, France, and the United Provinces, and every proper measure was concerted with those powers to prevent hostilities. Cadogan was sent to the Hague, Dubois came to London, and settled with the ministry, terms for an accommodation between the Emperor and the king of Spain *. George the First even proceeded so far as to propose the cession of Gibraltar †, on the consideration of an equivalent, and permitted the regent duke of Orleans to make the offer to the king of Spain, if he would ratify the terms specified in the treaty, called the quadruple alliance, passed at London on the 2d of August 1718, between the Emperor, England, and France, and afterwards acceded to by the United Provinces.

By this alliance, the Emperor renounced all claims to the crown of Spain, consented, that Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia, as male fiefs of the empire, should descend, in default of male heirs, to Don Carlos, eldest son of Elizabeth Farnese, by Philip the Fifth. In return for these concessions, the Emperor was to be gratified with the possession of Sicily, in lieu of which territory, Sardinia was to be allotted to Victor Amadeus. The terms to be imposed on Philip were, the renunciation of all claims to the dominions of the Emperor, in Italy, and the Netherlands. Three months being allowed to Philip for the acceptance of these conditions, Stanhope himself employed this interval in conducting the negotiation in person: he repaired to Paris, and after adjusting measures with the regent proceeded to Madrid. In a conference with Alberoni, he represented that a French army was preparing to invade Spain, and that a British squadron, under the command of admiral Byng, was sailing for the Mediterranean, with orders to attack and destroy the Spanish fleet, if Sicily was not evacuated: he even gave a list of the number and force of the Ships, to convince him of their evident superiority ‡. These overtures were rejected with haughtiness and even contempt. Stanhope's immediate departure from Spain became the signal for war; the French troops advanced, admiral Byng attacked, captured and destroyed the greater part of the Spanish fleet. The king of Spain, disap-

* Tindal, vol. 19, p. 167.

† See Chapter on Gibraltar, in Period IV.

‡ Earl Stanhope's Letter to Secretary Craggs; Hardwicke Papers.

pointed in his hopes of making an impression on England, by the death of Charles the Twelfth, and the defection of the Czar, was compelled to dismiss Alberoni, and to accede to the quadruple alliance.

During the whole progress of these transactions, Walpole strenuously opposed the conduct of government. On the motion, made by Sir William Strickland, for an address of thanks to the king for his unwearied endeavours to promote the welfare of his kingdoms, and to preserve the tranquillity of Europe, and to assure him that the house would make good such exceedings of men for the sea service, for the year 1718, as his majesty should find necessary *, Walpole observed, that such an address had all the air of a declaration of war against Spain. In the following sessions, when secretary Craggs laid before the house, copies of some of the treaties relating to the quadruple alliance, alluded to in the speech from the throne, Walpole no less warmly objected to the words in the motion for an address, expressing the entire satisfaction of the house in those measures which the king had already taken; he urged, "That it was against the common rules of prudence, and the methods of proceeding in that house, to approve a thing before they knew what it was; that he was thoroughly convinced of, and as ready as any person in that assembly, to acknowledge his majesty's great care for the general peace of Europe, and the interest of Great Britain; but that to sanction, in the manner proposed, the late measures, could have no other view than to screen ministers, who were conscious of having done something amiss, and, who having begun a war against Spain, would now make it the parliament's war: and concluded, by expressing an entire dissatisfaction at a conduct contrary to the law of nations, and a breach of solemn treaties †." When Craggs, in reply, gave an abstract of the articles of the quadruple alliance, Walpole, after reiterating his professions of duty and affection to the king, distinguished between him and his ministers, and expressed his unwillingness to approve the measures pursued, until the treaties on which those measures were founded had been fully and maturely examined ‡. Craggs having presented the translations of the remaining treaties, and the king having sent a message, that he had declared war against Spain, Walpole combated the address, and while his brother Horace made a long speech against the quadruple alliance, and particularly argued that the grant of Sicily to the Emperor in exchange for Sardinia, was a breach of the treaty of Utrecht, he himself exclaimed against the injustice of attacking the Spanish fleet before the declaration of war §. But the answer given to this vio-

Chapter 17.
1717 to 1719.

Opposes the
war with
Spain.

March 17,
1718.

Nov. 11.

Nov. 13.

Dec. 17.

* Chandler.

† Chandler.

‡ Chandler.

§ Chandler, vol. 6. p. 191.

Period II.

1714 to 1720.

Objects to
the quadru-
ple alliance.

lent declamation by the ministerial advocates, was not unreasonable. They stated, that the blame could attach only to Spain; the conduct of the king and ministers was agreeable to the law of nations, and to the rules of equity. Was it just to attack Sardinia, without any previous declaration of war, and while the Emperor was engaged with the Turks? Was it just to invade Sicily, without the least provocation? And was it not just in the king of England to vindicate the faith of treaties, and to protect the trade of his subjects, which had been violently oppressed? But though Walpole might in this, and other instances, appear influenced by the spirit of party, yet the arguments which he and his friends urged against the articles of the quadruple alliance, are proved by experience to have been well founded; for although the accession of Spain seemed to complete the peace of Utrecht, since the Emperor acknowledged Philip king of Spain, and Philip renounced all claims to the Netherlands, the Milanese, Naples, and Sicily, yet those two princes were too much irritated to enter cordially into this scheme of pacification: both parties had made cessions without relinquishing their respective pretensions, and it will be difficult to decide, whether the Emperor or Philip were most dissatisfied with the quadruple alliance.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH:

1718—1719.

Origin and Progress of the Peerage Bill.—Opposition and Speech of Walpole.—Bill rejected.

Motives for
the introduc-
tion of the
peerage bill.

IN opposition to the peerage bill, Walpole employed all his talents and eloquence, and bore the most conspicuous part in obtaining its defeat.

This bill was projected by Sunderland; his views were, to restrain the power of the prince of Wales, when he came to the throne, whom he had offended beyond all hopes of forgiveness, and to extend and perpetuate his own influence, by the creation of many new peers. The unfortunate misunderstanding between the king and his son, which had recently increased to a very alarming degree, favoured the success of his scheme; and the king, from a motive of mean jealousy, was induced to give up this important and honourable branch of his royal prerogative, and to strip the crown of its brightest

brightest jewel. Sunderland had little difficulty in acquiring a large majority in the house of lords, in favour of a measure which so highly increased their power; the whole body of the Scotch peers in the upper house were gained by the promise of an hereditary seat, and many of the lords, who from form opposed the bill, were secretly not averse to its passing. Being secure of the lords, he relied for success in the house of commons, on the known abhorrence of the Whigs, who formed a large majority, to the creation of the twelve peers, during the administration of Oxford; he had been witness to their repeated and vehement asseverations, that the crown ought in future to be deprived of a prerogative which by that act had brought dishonour on Great Britain, and endangered the liberties of Europe. Even the Whigs in opposition he thought could not venture to obstruct a bill of such a nature, without losing the confidence of their party. Under these circumstances, a bill to limit the number of peers was proposed.

The king sent a message to the house, that, "he had so much at heart the settling the peerage of the whole kingdom, on such a foundation as might secure the freedom and constitution of parliament in all future ages, that he was willing his prerogative should not stand in the way of so great and necessary a work *." In consequence of this message, a bill was brought in "to settle and limit the peerage in such a manner, that the number of English peers should not be enlarged beyond six of the present number, which, upon failure of issue male, might be supplied by new creations: that, instead of the sixteen elective peers from Scotland, twenty-five should be made hereditary on the part of that kingdom; and that this number, upon failure of heirs male, should be supplied from the other members of the Scotch peerage †;" after a strenuous opposition from Cowper, and some partial objections from Townshend and Nottingham, the bill was twice read, and the articles agreed to without division; but on the day appointed for a third reading, Stanhope observed, "That the bill having made a great noise, and raised strange apprehensions; and since the design of it had been so misrepresented, and so misunderstood, that it was like to meet with great opposition in the other house, he thought it advisable to let that matter lie still till a more proper opportunity ‡."

The unpopularity of the measure, and the ferment it had excited in the nation, were the motives which induced Sunderland to withdraw the motion at the moment of certain success in the house of lords. In vain the pen of

Chapter 18.

1718 to 1719.

The king's
message.

2d. March.

14th.

Bill with-
drawn.Its unpopu-
larity.

* Journals of the House of Lords.—Chandler.

† Lords Journals.

‡ Ibid.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Walpole's
pamphlet.

Sunderland's
efforts.

Meeting of
the Whigs at
Devonshire
house.

Addison had been employed in defending the bill, in a paper called *The Old Whig*, against Steele, who attacked it in a pamphlet intitled *The Plebeian*; and whose arguments had greater weight with the public. Walpole also published a pamphlet on the same side of the question, "*The Thoughts of a Member of the lower House, in relation to a Project for restraining and limiting the Power of the Crown in the future Creation of Peers* *." In this publication, he explained the nature of the bill, and exposed the views of those who introduced it, with a perspicuity of argument, and simplicity of style adapted to all capacities, and calculated to make a general impression.

The minister, however, did not relinquish his darling bill. During the interval between the prorogation and meeting of parliament, he exerted every effort to engage a majority in its favour. Bribes were profusely lavished, promises and threats were alternately employed, in every shape which his sanguine and overbearing temper could suggest. He affected to declare, that it was the king's desire, and not the act of the ministry; he did not attempt to conceal that it was levelled against the future government of the prince of Wales, whom he represented as capable of *doing mad things* † when he came to the throne. He declared that the necessary consequence of its rejection would be the ruin of the Whigs, and the introduction of the Tories into the confidence and favour of the king; expressed his surprise that any person who styled himself a Whig should oppose it; and exerted himself in the business with so much heat and violence, that in endeavouring to persuade Middleton, lord chancellor of Ireland, who refused to support the measure in the British house of commons, the blood gushed from his nose ‡.

These efforts were attended with such success, that at a meeting held by the leaders of the Whigs in opposition, at Devonshire house, Walpole found the whole body lukewarm, irresolute, or desponding: several of the peers secretly favoured a bill which would increase their importance; others declared, that as Whigs, it would be a manifest inconsistency to object to a measure tending to prevent the repetition of an abuse of prerogative against which they had repeatedly inveighed; those who were sincerely averse to it, were unwilling to exert themselves in hopeless resistance, and it was the prevailing opinion that the bill should be permitted to pass without opposition. Walpole alone dissented, and reprobated, in the strongest terms, this resolution as dastardly and impolitic. He maintained that it was the only point on which they could harass administration with any prospect of success;

* Royal and Noble Authors, vol. 2. p. 140.

† Lord Middleton's conversation with Lord Sunderland. Correspondence, Period II.

‡ See Lord Middleton's Letters and Minutes. Correspondence, Period II.

that

that he would place it in such a light as to excite indignation in every independent commoner; that he saw a spirit rising against it among the Whigs, and particularly among the country gentlemen, who were otherwise not averse to support government. He said, that he had overheard a member of the house of commons, a country gentleman, who possessed an estate of not more than £. 800 a year, declare to another with great warmth, that although he had no chance of being made a peer himself, yet, he would never consent to the injustice of giving a perpetual exclusion to his family. He was convinced, he added, that the same sentiment would have a strong effect upon the whole body of country gentlemen; and concluded his animated remonstrances, by declaring, that if deserted by his party, he himself would singly stand forth and oppose it. This declaration, urged with uncommon vehemence, occasioned much altercation, and many persuasions were made to deter him from adopting a measure which appeared chimerical and absurd; but when they found that he persisted, the whole party gradually came over to his opinion, and agreed that an opposition should be made to it in the house of commons *.

Chapter 18.

1718 to 1719.

The bill was again introduced to the notice of parliament, at the opening of the session, by the following artful expressions in the king's speech: "If the necessities of my government have sometimes engaged your duty and affection to intrust me with powers, of which you have always, with good reason, been jealous, the whole world must acknowledge they have been so used, as to justify the confidence you have reposed in me. And as I can truly affirm, that no prince was ever more zealous to increase his own authority, than I am to perpetuate the liberty of my people, I hope you will think of all proper methods to establish and transmit to your posterity, the freedom of our happy constitution, and particularly to secure that part, which is most liable to abuse. I value myself upon being the first, who hath given you an opportunity of doing it; and I must recommend it to you, to compleat those measures, which remained imperfect the last session †."

Bill passes the lords.

This speech was made the 23d of November; on the 25th, the duke of Buckingham brought the bill into the house, where it was only opposed by Cowper. It was committed on the 26th, ingrossed on the 28th, passed the 30th, and sent down to the house of commons on the 1st of December †. At this period the bill had undergone no alteration from that proposed in the

Sent to the commons.

* See speaker Onslow's Remarks on Opposition. Correspondence.

† Journals.—Chandler.

‡ Journals.—Chandler.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Walpole's
speech.

last session; but it was understood, that in order to conciliate the commons, the king was willing to give up another branch of his prerogative, that of pardoning in cases of impeachment, and the lords would waive their privilege of *scandalum magnatum* *.

This memorable bill was read a second time on the 8th of December†, and a motion made for committing it, gave rise to a long and warm debate: it was principally supported by Craggs, secretary of state, Aislaby, chancellor of the exchequer, Lechmere, attorney-general, and Hampden; it was opposed by Sir Richard Steele, in a very masterly speech, by Smith, Sir John Parkington, Methuen, and Walpole.

On this occasion he forsook his usual mode of debating, which was plain, and seldom decorated with metaphorical ornaments, and, with great animation, began his speech by introducing this classical allusion:

"Among the Romans, the temple of fame was placed behind the temple of virtue, to denote that there was no coming to the temple of fame, but through that of virtue. But if this bill is passed into a law, one of the most powerful incentives to virtue would be taken away, since there would be no arriving at honour, but through the winding-sheet of an old decrepit lord, or the grave of an extinct noble family: a policy very different from that glorious and enlightened nation, who made it their pride to hold out to the world illustrious examples of merited elevation,

" Patere honoris seirent ut cuncti viam.

"It is very far from my thoughts to depreciate the advantages, or detract from the respect due to illustrious birth; for though the philosopher may say with the poet,

*Et genus et proavos, et quæ non fecimus ipsi,
Vix ea nostra voco;*

yet the claim derived from that advantage, though fortuitous, is so generally and so justly conceded, that every endeavour to subvert the principle, would merit contempt and abhorrence. But though illustrious birth forms one

* Words spoken in derogation of a peer, a judge, or other great officer of the realm, are called *scandalum magnatum*, and, though they be such as would not be actionable in the case of a common person, yet when spoken in disgrace of such high and respectable characters, they amount to an atrocious injury, which is redressed by an action on the case, founded on

many ancient statutes; as well on behalf of the crown to inflict the punishment of imprisonment on the slanderer, as on behalf of the party to recover damages for the injury sustained.—Blackstone's Commentaries. B. 3. C. 8.

† See Journals.—Chandler, by mistake, says the 7th.

undisputed

undisputed title to pre-eminence, and superior consideration, yet surely it ought not to be the only one. The origin of high titles was derived from the will of the sovereign to reward signal services, or conspicuous merit, by a recompense which, surviving to posterity, should display in all ages the virtues of the receiver, and the gratitude of the donor. Is merit then so rarely discernible, or is gratitude so small a virtue in our days, that the one must be supposed to be its own reward, and the other limited to a barren display of impotent good-will? Had this bill originated with some noble peer of distinguished ancestry, it would have excited less surprise; a desire to exclude others from a participation of honours, is no novelty in persons of that class: *Quod ex aliorum meritis sibi arrogant, id mihi ex meis ascribi nolunt.*

Chapter 18.

1718 to 1719.

“ But it is matter of just surprise, that a bill of this nature should either have been projected, or at least promoted by a gentleman * who was, not long ago, seated amongst us, and who, having got into the house of peers, is now desirous to shut the door after him.

“ When great alterations in the constitution are to be made, the experiment should be tried for a short time before the proposed change is finally carried into execution, lest it should produce evil instead of good; but in this case, when the bill is once sanctioned by parliament, there can be no future hopes of redress, because the upper house will always oppose the repeal of an act, which has so considerably increased their power. The great unanimity with which this bill has passed the lords, ought to inspire some jealousy in the commons; for it must be obvious, that whatever the lords gain, must be acquired at the loss of the commons, and the diminution of the regal prerogative; and that in all disputes between the lords and commons, when the house of lords is immutable, the commons must, sooner or later, be obliged to recede.

“ The view of the ministry in framing this bill, is plainly nothing but to secure their power in the house of lords. The principal argument on which the necessity of it is founded, is drawn from the mischief occasioned by the creation of twelve peers during the reign of queen Anne, for the purpose of carrying an infamous peace through the house of lords; that was only a temporary measure, whereas the mischief to be occasioned by this bill, will be perpetual. It creates thirty-one peers by authority of parliament; so extraordinary a step cannot be supposed to be taken without some sinister design in future. The ministry want no additional strength in the house of lords, for conducting the common affairs of government, as is sufficiently

* Lord Stanhope.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

proved by the unanimity with which they have carried through this bill. If, therefore, they think it necessary to acquire additional strength, it must be done with views and intentions more extravagant and hostile to the constitution, than any which have yet been attempted. The bill itself is of a most insidious and artful nature. The immediate creation of nine Scotch peers, and the reservation of six English peers for a necessary occasion, is of double use; to be ready for the house of lords if wanted, and to engage three times the number in the house of commons by hopes and promises.

“ To sanction this attempt, the king is induced to affect to wave some part of his prerogative; but this is merely an ostensible renunciation, unfounded in fact, or reason. I am desirous to treat of all points relating to the private affairs of his majesty, with the utmost tenderness and caution, but I should wish to ask the house, and I think I can anticipate the answer; Has any such question been upon the tapis, as no man would forgive the authors, that should put them under the necessity of voting against either side*? Are there any misfortunes, which every honest man secretly laments and bewails, and would think the last of mischiefs, should they ever become the subject of public and parliamentary conversations? Cannot numbers that hear me testify, from the solicitations and whispers they have met with, that there are men ready and determined to attempt these things if they had a prospect of success? If they have thought, but I hope they are mistaken in their opinion of this house, that the chief obstacle would arise in the house of lords, where they have always been tender upon personal points, especially to any of their own body, does not this project enable them to carry any question through the house of lords? Must not the twenty-five Scots peers accept upon any terms, or be for ever excluded? Or will not twenty-five be found in all Scotland that will? How great will the temptation be likewise to six English, to fill the present vacancies? And shall we then, with our eyes open, take this step, which I cannot but look upon as the beginning of woe and confusion; and shall we, under these apprehensions, break through the Union, and shut up the door of honour? It certainly will have that effect; nay, the very argument advanced in its support, that it will add weight to the commons, by keeping the rich men there, admits that it will be an exclusion.

“ But we are told, that his majesty has voluntarily consented to this limitation of his prerogative. It may be true; but may not the king have been deceived? Which if it is ever to be supposed, must be admitted in this case.

* He here probably alluded to the misunderstanding between the king and prince of Wales.

It is incontrovertible, that kings have been over-ruled by the importunity of their ministers to remove, or to take into administration, persons who are disagreeable to them. The character of the king furnishes us also a strong proof that he has been deceived; for although it is a fact, that in Hanover, where he possesses absolute power, he never tyrannised over his subjects, or despotically exercised his authority, yet, can one instance be produced when he ever gave up a prerogative?

Chapter 18.
1718 to 1719.

“ If the constitution is to be amended in the house of lords, the greatest abuses ought to be first corrected. But what is the abuse, against which this bill so vehemently inveighs, and which it is intended to correct? The abuse of the prerogative in creating an occasional number of peers, is a prejudice only to the lords, it can rarely be a prejudice to the commons, but must generally be exercised in their favour; and should it be argued, that in case of a difference between the two houses, the king may exercise that branch of his prerogative, with a view to force the commons to recede, we may reply, that upon a difference with the commons, the king possesses his negative, and the exercise of that negative would be less culpable than making peers to screen himself.

“ But the strongest argument against the bill is, that it will not only be a discouragement to virtue and merit, but would endanger our excellent constitution; for as there is a due balance between the three branches of the legislature, it will destroy that balance, and consequently subvert the whole constitution, by causing one of the three powers, which are now dependent on each other, to preponderate in the scale. The crown is dependent upon the commons by the power of granting money; the commons are dependent on the crown by the power of dissolution: The lords will now be made independent of both.

“ The sixteen elective Scotch peers, already admit themselves to be a dead court weight, yet the same sixteen are now to be made hereditary, and nine added to their number. These twenty-five, under the influence of corrupt ministers, may find their account in betraying their trust; the majority of the lords may also find their account in supporting such ministers; but the commons, and the commons only, must suffer for all, and be deprived of every advantage. If the proposed measure destroys two negatives in the crown, it gives a negative to these twenty-five united, and confers a power, superior to that of the king himself, on the head of a clan, who will have the power of recommending many. The Scotch commoners can have no other view in supporting this measure, but the expected aggrandizement of their own chiefs. It will dissolve the allegiance of the Scotch peers who are not

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1714 to 1720.

amongst the twenty-five, and who can never hope for the benefit of an election to be peers of parliament, and almost exact obedience from the sovereign to the betrayers of the constitution.

“ The present view of the bill is dangerous ; the view to posterity, personal and unpardonable ; it will make the lords masters of the king, according to their own confession, when they admit, that a change of administration renders a new creation of peers necessary ; for by precluding the king from making peers in future, it at the same time precludes him from changing the present administration, who will naturally fill the vacancies with their own creatures ; and the new peers will adhere to the first minister, with the same zeal and unanimity as those created by Oxford adhered to him.

“ If when the parliament was made septennial, the power of dissolving it before the end of seven years had been wrested from the crown, would not such an alteration have added immense authority to the commons ? and yet, the prerogative of the crown in dissolving parliaments, may be, and has been oftener abused, than the power of creating peers.

“ But it may be observed, that the king, for his own sake, will rarely make a great number of peers, for they, being usually created by the influence of the first minister, soon become, upon a change of administration, a weight against the crown ; and had queen Anne lived, the truth of this observation would have been verified in the case of most of the twelve peers made by Oxford. Let me ask, however, is the abuse of any prerogative a sufficient reason for totally annihilating that prerogative ? Under that consideration, the power of dissolving parliaments ought to be taken away, because that power has been more exercised, and more abused than any of the other prerogatives ; yet in 1641, when the king had assented to a law that disabled him from proroguing or dissolving parliament, without the consent of both houses, he was from that time under subjection to the parliament, and from thence followed all the subsequent mischiefs, and his own destruction. It may also be asked, Whether the prerogative of making peace and war has never been abused ? I might here call to your recollection the peace of Utrecht, and the present war with Spain. Yet who will presume to advise that the power of making war and peace, should be taken from the crown ?

“ How can the lords expect the commons to give their concurrence to a bill by which they and their posterity are to be for ever excluded from the peerage ? How would they themselves receive a bill which should prevent a baron from being made a viscount, a viscount an earl, an earl a marquis, and a marquis a duke ? Would they consent to limit the number of any rank of peerage ? Certainly none ; unless, perhaps, the dukes. If the pretence for this

this measure is, that it will tend to secure the freedom of parliament, I say that there are many other steps more important and less equivocal, such as the discontinuance of bribes and pensions.

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1718 to 1719.

"That this bill will secure the liberty of parliament, I totally deny; it will secure a great preponderance to the peers; it will form them into a compact impenetrable phalanx, by giving them the power to exclude, in all cases of extinction and creation, all such persons from their body, who may be obnoxious to them. In the instances we have seen of their judgment in some late cases, sufficient marks of partiality may be found to put us on our guard against committing to them the power they would derive from this bill, of judging the right of latent or dormant titles, when their verdict would be of such immense importance. If gentlemen will not be convinced by argument, at least, let them not shut their ears to the dreadful example of former times; let them recollect that the overweening disposition of the great barons, to aggrandize their own dignity, occasioned them to exclude the lesser barons, and to that circumstance may be fairly attributed the sanguinary wars which so long desolated the country*."

The effect of this speech on the house, exceeded the most sanguine expectation; it fixed those who had before been wavering and irresolute, brought over many who had been tempted by the speciousness of the measure to favour its introduction, and procured its rejection by a triumphant majority of 269 against 177.

Bill rejected.

* The substance of this speech is collected from memorandums in Sir Robert Walpole's own hand-writing, among lord Orford's pa-

pers.—See also, Onflow on Opposition, Correspondence, Period II.—Historical Register, 1719.—Chandler.

(iv) Vol. 2.
p. 550.

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1720 to 1727.

PERIOD THE THIRD:

From the South Sea Act, to the Death of GEORGE the First:

1720—1727.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH:

1720.

Origin and Progress of the South Sea Company.—Their Project for liquidating the National Debt.—Espoused by the Ministry.—Opposed by Walpole.—Accepted by Parliament.—Walpole reconciles the King and the Prince of Wales.—Forms a Coalition with Sunderland.—Townshend appointed President of the Council.—Walpole Paymaster of the Forces.—Retires into the Country.

Origin of the
South Sea
Company.

THE commencement of this period forms a memorable æra in the political life of Sir Robert Walpole, and holds him forth as the restorer of the national credit, which the fatal effects of the South Sea scheme had brought to the brink of destruction.

The South Sea Company owed its origin to a chimerical project, formed by Harley in 1711, for the purpose of restoring the public credit, which had been greatly affected by the dismissal of the Whig ministry, and of establishing a fund for the discharge of the navy and army debentures, and the other parts of the floating debt, which amounted to £. 9,471,325; and was afterwards increased to £. 10,000,000. With a view to settle a fund for paying the interest of 6 per cent. on these arrears, which amounted to the annual sum of £. 568,279, all the duties upon wines, vinegar, tobacco, India goods, wrought silks, whale fins, and a few other duties, were rendered permanent. In order to allure the creditors with the hopes of advantages from a new commerce, the monopoly of a trade to the South Sea, or coast of Spanish America, was granted to a company composed of the several proprietors of this funded debt, which being incorporated by act of parliament, took the appellation

pellation of the South Sea Company *. The great advantages to be derived from this commerce, had been held forth and exaggerated from the time of our first voyages to Spanish America, in the reign of Elizabeth, and had been still farther increased by the reports of the buccaneers. The considerable riches which France had brought from America, since the establishment of Philip the Fifth on the throne of Spain, had contributed to raise the sanguine expectations of the British merchants; a rumour, industriously circulated, that four ports on the coasts of Peru and Chili, were to be ceded by Spain, inflamed the general ardour; the prospect of exchanging gold, silver, and rich drugs for the manufactures of England, were plausible allurements for an enterprising and commercial nation; and the mines of Potosi and Mexico, were to diffuse their inexhaustible stores through the medium of the new company.

The famous act of parliament, which incorporated the subscribers of the debts, under the name of the governor and company of merchants of Great Britain trading to the South Seas and other parts of America, was called the earl of Oxford's master piece, and considered by his panegyrists as the sure means of bringing an inexhaustible mine of riches into England. But in fact this scheme was settled on a false foundation; for by the peace of Utrecht, Spain and the Indies being confirmed to Philip the Fifth, that monarch was too jealous to admit the English to a free trade in the South Sea, and instead of the advantageous commerce which Oxford had held forth, the company obtained only the † assiento contract, or the privilege of supplying the Spanish colonies of America with negroes for 30 years, with the permission of sending to Spanish America an annual ship, limited both as to tonnage and value of cargo, of the profits of which the king of Spain reserved one fourth, and five per cent. on the other three fourths ‡. But this disappointment was attempted to be counteracted by the declaration made by Oxford, that Spain had permitted two ships, in addition to the annual ship, to carry merchandize, during the first year to the northern coasts of Spanish America, and a pompous nomination of the several ports where the company had leave to trade, and settle factories. But the grand benefits of this commerce were never realised. The first voyage of the annual ship was not made till 1717, and in the following year, the trade was suppressed by the rupture with Spain. Their effects, factories, and servants were seized and detained, notwithstand-

Chapter 19.

1720.

Progress and
suspension of
their trade.

1713.

* James Postlethwayt's Historical State of the South Sea Company.—Anderson on Commerce, vol. 3. p. 43. Tindal, vol. 17. p. 361.

† Assiento is a Spanish word, signifying a firm or contract.

‡ Anderson, vol. 3. page 55.

ing.

Period III. 1720 to 1727. ing the agreement in the assiento, which allowed, in case of a rupture, eighteen months for the removal of their effects.

Plan of liquidating the national debt.

Such was the state of the South Sea Company, when the ministry, instead of attempting to lessen the national incumbrances, by the only just and successful means, a clear and inviolable sinking fund, adopted the visionary schemes of projectors, and gave to the South Sea Company the power of fascinating the minds of the public, and spreading an infatuation similar to that which had recently involved France in a national bankruptcy. The grand point which government had in view, was the reduction of the irredeemable annuities, created in the reigns of William and Anne, for a period of 89, 96, and 99 years, amounting nearly to £. 800,000 per annum, as no effectual measures could be adopted to lessen the public debts, whilst these annuities remained irredeemable.

Proposal laid before parliament.

Feb. 22d.

In order to effect this liquidation, the minister accepted proposals from the South Sea Company, for reducing the debts to a redeemable state: as the object of the ministers, who had previously and secretly arranged the scheme with the directors, was to surprise the house of commons into the measure of granting this extensive privilege to the South Sea Company, and of preventing competition, they entertained the most sanguine hopes of success, from the specious advantages which they held forth to the public as the necessary consequences. They accordingly laid the business before a committee of the house of commons *. Aislabe having opened the proposal of the South Sea Company, and declared that, if it was accepted, the national debt could be liquidated in twenty-six years, was followed by secretary Craggs, who after congratulating the chancellor of the exchequer, on the clear and intelligible manner in which he had explained the business, and the nation on the prospect of discharging the debt sooner than was generally expected, concluded by observing, that no other regular motion could be made, than that the chairman should report progress, and desire leave to sit again, as he took it for granted, that every gentleman was ready and willing to receive the proposal according to the scheme which had been so well explained. On sitting down a profound silence ensued, and continued for almost a quarter of an hour, until the secretary again rose, and made the motion in form. Thomas Brodrick †, member for Stockbridge, then rose, and after observing, that until the national debt was discharged, we could not properly speaking, call ourselves a

Objected to.

* Journals.

† Brother of lord Middleton, lord chancellor of Ireland.

nation, and that therefore every proposal, tending to that great end, ought to be received and considered: He added, that the first gentleman who spoke, appeared to recommend this scheme exclusively, and the secretary had agreed with him; but it was to be hoped, that with a view of obtaining the best bargain for the nation, every other company, or any society of men, might be also at full liberty to deliver in their proposals. This observation disconcerted and confounded the ministers. They felt themselves embarrassed, and being unable to give any reasonable arguments in favour of such a conduct, they had recourse to violent assertions and personal reflections. Aislachie, in particular, having used some unguarded expressions, "*that things of this nature must be carried on with spirit,*" was interrupted by Sir Joseph Jekyl, who observed, with much warmth, "It is this spirit which has undone the nation; our business is to consider thoroughly, deliberate calmly, and judge of the whole upon reason, not with the spirit alluded to." Aislachie, in attempting to explain, betrayed so much embarrassment, that he excited the laughter of the house. Walpole then rose, and put a momentary stop to these indecorous altercations. He applauded the design, agreed in general to the propriety of the scheme, but declared that some parts required amendment, and a few others were unreasonable, concluding strongly in favour of receiving all proposals, which seemed to be almost the general opinion. Lechmere replied, but instead of confining himself to the subject in debate, he poured forth invectives against the scheme which had been proposed by Walpole, for the payment of the national debt, and gave the preference to that before the house. Walpole, irritated by this virulent attack, rose again, and with no less asperity, but with more calmness and skill, retorted on Lechmere: he proved, from papers * which he held in his hand, that the member who spoke last had unfairly represented facts, exposed his deceitful mode of reasoning, entered minutely into the scheme, and laid open its fallacy in many material points. Lechmere, still farther provoked, again attempted to reply, but met with repeated interruptions. In vain the chairman called to order, and ex-

Walpole favours an open competition.

* Among the Orford Papers, are several notes and memorandums in Sir Robert Walpole's hand writing, which contain comparative accounts of the two proposals, and give the preference to that of the bank. These are probably some of the papers from which he

made his statements to the house, but as they were written merely for his own private use, and consist principally of figures, with few specific references, little use could be made of them. The magnitude of the South Sea project, will appear from one of these notes.

South Sea, present capital	—	—	—	11,746,844	8	10
Purchase of the redeemable debts	—	—	—	15,924,218	12	10½
Irredeemables	—	—	—	15,057,493	13	8
And including the original capital, the whole stock is	—	—	—	£. 42,728,556	15	4½

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Proposal of
the bank.

Feb. 1st.

Walpole
speaks against
the South Sea
scheme.

claimed, "Hear your member." The whole house repeatedly cried out, "We have heard him long enough." The chairman quitted the chair, and the speaker having resumed it, the house unanimously agreed to receive all proposals, and to resolve itself into a committee the following Wednesday, to consider farther of the subject *.

In consequence of these resolutions, the bank of England laid a proposition before the commons, offering still more advantageous terms, and as it was supposed, that considerable benefits would accrue to those whose scheme was accepted, a strong competition prevailed between the bank and South Sea company, who endeavoured to outbid each other. The South Sea company had offered to give £.3,500,000; but the bank, having bid £.5,500,000, the company were so irritated, that at a general court, the directors were instructed to obtain the preference, *cost what it would* †, and they succeeded, by the offer of paying the enormous sum of £.7,567,500, as a gratuity to the public. This proposal being laid before the house of commons, was warmly opposed by Walpole, who spoke in favour of the bank. In vain he displayed the fallacy of the South Sea scheme, and the great difference between that and the bank, by shewing, that the company was not limited in the price they were to put on the stock made over to them; whereas the bank offered a specific sum of £.1,700 stock, for every hundred pounds in the long annuities, and the same proportion for the short annuities. In vain he urged, that it countenanced the pernicious practice of stock jobbing, by diverting the genius of the nation from trade and industry; that it held out a dangerous lure for decoying the unwary to their ruin by a false prospect of gain, and to part with the gradual profits of their labour, for imaginary wealth. In vain he insisted, that if the proposal of the South Sea company should be accepted, the rise of their stock ought to be limited. In vain he dwelt on the miseries and confusion which then prevailed in France, from the adoption of similar measures. In vain he argued, that as the whole success of the scheme must chiefly depend on the rise of the stock, the great principle of the project was an evil of the first magnitude; it was to raise artificially the value of the stock, by exciting and keeping up a general infatuation, and by promising dividends out of funds which would not be adequate to the purpose. In vain he predicted, that if the establishment succeeded, the directors would become masters of the government, form an absolute aristocracy in the kingdom, and controul the resolutions of the legislature; or if it did not succeed, the failure would cause

* No account of this extraordinary debate is to be found in any publication:—The substance is taken from a letter of Thomas Bro-

derick to lord chancellor Middleton, January 24th. See Correspondence, Period III.

† True State of the South Sea Scheme.

a general

a general discontent. He closed his speech by observing, that such would be the delusive consequences, that the public would conceive it a dream *. His arguments and his eloquence were of no avail. He was compared by his friends to Cassandra, predicting evils which would only be believed when the event proved their reality, and only deprecated when they were felt; and he whose speeches, in matters of finance, occupied the house with more than usual attention, was now scarcely heard. The preference was given to the South Sea, and the bill was afterwards carried by a majority of more than 3 to 1 †. Thus passed this fatal act, compared by earl Cowper to the Trojan horse, which was ushered in and received with great pomp and acclamations of joy, but was contrived for treachery and destruction. Walpole not only spoke with energy against the project, but gave to the public a pamphlet on the subject, called, "The South Sea Scheme considered ‡."

At this period, Sunderland felt himself involved in great difficulties; he had promised the Hanoverians to procure for them a repeal of the restraining clause in the act of settlement, but the success which marked the efforts of his adversaries, proved the impracticability of such an attempt. The impatience of the foreign favourites to obtain the full possession of the expected honors and emoluments, rendered them dissatisfied with the minister, who while he professed an inclination, avowed his want of power to gratify them. Thus exposed to the hostile attacks of one party, and ill supported by the other, he found himself under the necessity of gaining friends to strengthen his administration. The opposition which Walpole had given to the measures of government, and his great influence in the house of commons, where he was feebly resisted by Craggs, Aislaby and Lechmere, pointed him out as the most desirable co-adjutor in the present state of circumstances; overtures were made to him and Townshend, and a partial coalition took place.

On the 6th of May, Walpole seconded a motion, made by Pelham, for an address of thanks to the king; on the 4th of June he was appointed paymaster general of the forces, and on the 11th, Townshend was nominated president of the council. Previously, however, to this arrangement, Walpole had, in conjunction with the duke of Devonshire, been the principal means of effecting a reconciliation between the king and the prince of Wales, whose misunderstanding had arisen to so alarming a height, as to threaten a

Chapter 19.
1720.

April 2.

Townshend
and Walpole
join Sunder-
land.

Walpole pay-
master of the
forces.

Reconciles
the king and
prince.

* Political State of Europe, vol. 20. Ander-
son.—Memorandums and Letters in the
Walpole and Orford Papers.

† Journals.—Political State, vol. 19, p. 430.

‡ Royal and Noble Authors—Article, Earl
of Orford. History of the South Sea Company.
—Anderson, vol. 3.—Steuart's Political Econo-

my, vol. 2. p. 387.—Sir Robert Walpole's
Pamphlet, called South Sea Scheme consider-
ed.—Sir John Blunt's Pamphlet; The true
State of the South Sea Scheme.—Political
State of Great Britain, vol. 19, 20, 21.—Tindal,
vol. 19.

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1720 to 1727.

disturbance of the public tranquillity. The causes of this misunderstanding have been already related, and it was still farther increased and brought into notice, by an incident which happened at the christening of one of the young princes. The king was to stand godfather, and the prince had designed his uncle, the duke of York, for the other; but, when the ceremony was performed, the duke of Newcastle, lord chamberlain of the household, stood godfather, by the king's command, not as proxy for the duke of York, but in his own name. This circumstance irritated the prince, who, at the conclusion of the ceremony, violently reproached the duke, almost in the king's presence, for having solicited the honour in his despite. The king, incensed at this indiscreet want of respect, signified his displeasure, by commanding him to remain in his apartment, under arrest, and soon afterwards ordered him to quit the palace. Notice was also formally given, that no persons who paid their respects to the prince and princess of Wales, would be received at court, and they were deprived of their usual guard, and of all other marks of distinction*.

The resentment of the king was also carried to such an extremity, that with a view to embarrass his son, he formed a resolution of obtaining an act of parliament for compelling him to resign, on his accession to the throne, his German dominions. With this view, the opinion of the lord chancellor Parker, afterwards earl of Macclesfield, was demanded, and a conference held to consider of the legality and expediency of the scheme. The answer given by the chancellor, fully put a stop to the measure, as inexpedient and impracticable, and liable to be followed by very dangerous consequences†.

The honour of effecting the reconciliation in the royal family was principally due to Walpole. In a conference which he held with Sunderland, to arrange the plan of a joint administration, the minister, who was averse to the union of the two courts, endeavoured to detach him from the prince, and offered him any conditions for himself and friends, provided he would consent that the prince should remain in disgrace‡. But Walpole rejected these overtures, and insisted on the reconciliation, as an indispensable preliminary, before he would listen to any terms of coalition. Having extorted this concession, he, with the assistance of the duke of Devonshire§, disposed the prince of Wales to write a submissive letter, in which permission was request-

* Tindal, vol. 19, p. 169.

† The original draught of this curious conference, in the hand writing of the lord chancellor, is in the possession of Thomas Astle, esquire.

‡ Etough.—Communicated by Sir Robert Walpole.

§ Tindal, vol. 19, p. 344. Grove's Lives of the Dukes of Devonshire, vol. 2, p. 90.

ed to wait upon the king. He was accordingly admitted to a private conference, and on his return from the palace to Leicester house, where he had taken up his residence, was attended by a party of guards, and from that time the father and son appeared to be reconciled.

Although Walpole accepted the place of paymaster of the forces, yet he did not cordially coalesce with the administration; and on the prorogation of parliament, he took no active share in the government. He passed the remaining part of the summer at Houghton, and was called to take a leading part, when the voice of the king, of the parliament, and of the nation unanimously singled him out as the person best qualified to heal the wounds, which the frenzy and frauds of the South Sea company had inflicted on the public credit.

Chapter 19.

1720.

Retires to
Houghton.

1720.

July 28.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH:

1720—1721.

Departure of the King for Hanover.—Rise and Fall of the South Sea Stock.—National Infatuation and Despair.—Walpole's Endeavours to restore the Credit of the Company.—The King returns from Hanover.—Alarming State of Affairs.—Embarrassment of the Ministry.—Despondency of the King.—Walpole's Plan for the Restoration of Public Credit.—Discussed.

SOON after the appointment of Townshend and Walpole, the king departed for Hanover; having previously named a council of regency, composed of several high officers of state, contrary to the general expectation, which in consequence of the supposed union between the king and prince of Wales, looked to him as regent in the absence of his father.

At this crisis the general frenzy in favour of the South Sea speculation had risen to an enormous height. The compensation to the South Sea company, for the immediate payment of the £. 7,567,500, seemingly for no value received, was to be drawn from the profits of their scheme. These profits were to arise from, 1. The exclusive advantages of the trade, which although precarious, and depending on a peace with Spain, were stated at no less than
£. 200,000

June 14.
The king
goes to Han-
over.South Sea
infatuation.

Period III. 1720 to 1727. £. 200,000 a year. 2. The allowance for the charge of management, which was to be proportioned to the augmentation of their stock. 3. The difference of receiving 5 per cent. for the money expended in purchasing the public debts, when the usual interest was only 4 per cent. 4. The great addition to their wealth, from the constant rise in the price of the stock, in consequence of the artifices used to enhance its value; on which the whole success of the scheme depended *.

Artifices of
the company.

The company could not fulfil its engagements with government, and pay so large a sum as between seven and eight millions, without taking advantage of the general infatuation, and availing themselves of that spirit of pecuniary enterprise, which had seized the public mind. Imaginary advantages were accordingly held forth; groundless and mysterious† reports were circulated concerning valuable acquisitions in the South Sea, and hidden treasures; dividends of ten, thirty, and even fifty per cent. were voted, which the directors knew could never be paid, and for which there was no foundation.

Exaggerated
advantages.

The promoters of the scheme highly exaggerated the profits; rumours were at the same time spread, that the company, by monopolizing the fund of the whole national debt, would reduce government to the necessity of applying to them for loans, which would be advanced on their own terms; and it was even insinuated, that the proprietors would obtain, by the weight of their wealth, a majority in the house of commons, and make and depose ministers. The public being intoxicated with these ideas, the stock, which at the close of the books at Christmas, 1719, was only at 126, rose, at the opening of the first subscription, on the 14th of April, to above £. 300, the market-price being on that day 325: in other words, the creditors of the nation made over a debt of 100 for 33½ in South Sea stock. As the frenzy spread, and the desire of making rapid fortunes became contagious, the stock successively rose to above 1,000 per cent. at which price the books were opened for the fourth subscription the 24th of August; and this subscription, though the market-price of the established stock was below 800, was sold the same day for a premium of 30 and 40 per cent.

Rise and fall
of the stocks.

* *Steuarts Political Economy*, vol. 2. p. 386, 387. *Anderson's History of Commerce* vol. 3. p. 96.

† To these mysterious hints and fancied treasures, a ballad on the South Sea alluded;

What need have we of Indian wealth;
Or commerce with our neighbours?

Our constitution is in health,
And riches crown our labours.
Our South Sea ships have golden streaks,
They bring us wealth, 'tis granted;
But lodge their treasure in the clouds,
To hide it till it's wanted.

Political State, vol. 20. p. 178.

The sanguine cupidity, which marked this speculation, was not confined to the South Sea scheme: the whole nation became stock-jobbers and projectors: every day produced new proposals*, some of apparent importance and utility, others so absurd and futile, that their success was matter of surprise, and almost exceeds credibility. So prevalent was this rage, amongst persons even of the highest rank, that the prince of Wales was induced to become governor of the copper company. In vain Walpole and Compton endeavoured to dissuade him from this act of degradation, by representing, that he subjected himself to a prosecution, that he would be reviled in parliament, and that the *prince of Wales's bubble* would be hawked about in Change alley. Their remonstrances had no effect, the prince became governor, but afterwards, on receiving notice that a prosecution would be commenced against the company, withdrew his name, with a gain of £. 40,000 †.

These delusive projects received their first check from the power to which they owed their birth: The directors of the South Sea company, jealous of their success, and desirous to monopolize all the money of the speculators, obtained writs of *scire facias* against the conductors of bubbles, and thus put an end to them. But in opening the eyes of the deluded multitude, they took away the main prop of their own tottering edifice. Suspicion once excited was not to be suppressed, and the public, no longer amused by pompous declarations, and promises of dividends, which they were convinced could never be realized, declined all farther purchases of stock, which fell in less than three weeks to 400, and those who had bought at large premiums were involved in distress and ruin. Amongst the numbers who suffered by these speculations, were not only persons of the first rank, but merchants and traders of every class, and bankers, who having advanced the monies committed to them, on the subscription receipts, by their temporary stoppages augmented the general calamity.

When the public distress was arrived to a most alarming height, and despair pervaded all ranks of people, to Walpole every eye was directed, as the only person capable of affording assistance, under the pressure of immediate

* The reader will find near two hundred of these bubbles, enumerated in Anderson's History of Commerce, vol. 3. p. 103. Amongst the most absurd may be mentioned, projects, For transmuting quicksilver into a malleable and fine metal.—For importing a number of large jack-asses from Spain, in order to propagate a large breed of mules;—and for trading in human hair. But the most impudent and bare-

faced delusion, was that of a man who advertised, that upon payment of two guineas, the subscribers should be intitled to a hundred pound share, in a project which would be disclosed in a month; the extreme folly of the public was such, that he received a thousand of these subscriptions in one day, and then went off.

† Secretary Craggs to Earl Stanhope, July 12th. Correspondence, Period III.

Chapter 20.
1720 to 1721.
Other projects or bubbles.

Walpole's endeavours to retrieve the credit of the company.

necessity.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Arrival of
the king.

National de-
spendency.

necessity. When the aid of the bank became necessary to preserve the South Sea company from ruin, he was called from the country, and importuned to use his interest with the governors, to persuade them to accept a proposal made by the South Sea company, to circulate a number of their bonds. At this awful moment the clamour of distress was irresistible, and the bank, after great reluctance, arising from a natural dread of being involved in the same ruin which threatened the South Sea company, was at length induced to listen to the proposals. Walpole was present at several conferences between the committees of the two companies, and drew up, in the first conference, a minute, well known afterwards by the name of the bank contract, specifying the agreement of the bank, to circulate three millions of South Sea bonds for one year, on certain conditions, which were specified at a subsequent meeting. The report of his * interference, and the intended aid to be given by the bank, occasioned a temporary rise in the South Sea stock, but the public was in such a state of terror and agitation, and so desperate was the situation of the South Sea company, that any community of interests between the two companies, was considered as fatal to both. In consequence of this notion, such a demand was made on the bank, that the governors refused to abide by the terms of their agreement; alledging, that it was deficient in legal validity †.

The critical state of the nation having rendered the immediate presence of the king necessary, he hastily quitted his German dominions, and landed at Margate, on the 9th of November. But his presence had not the desired effect. South Sea stock, which at the king's arrival was at 210, fell in a few days to 135 ‡. The public now looked with anxious expectation for the assembling of parliament, which was to meet on the 25th of November; yet such were the difficulties under which the ministry laboured, to form a proper scheme for remedying the national distress, which daily increased, that it was farther prorogued to the 8th of December.

Nor is it a matter of wonder that the ministry were alarmed, and uncertain what measures to pursue. England had never experienced so total a destruction of credit, never was any country in so violent a paroxysm of despondency and terror. The South Sea company was considered as the sole cause of all the national misfortunes, the directors were indiscriminately loaded with execrations, and devoted by the public voice to condign punishment. Those who had promoted the scheme were involved in the same general detestation.

* Political State.

† True State of the South Sea Scheme.—

Some Considerations concerning the Public Funds, p. 88, 91.—Tindal.

‡ Political State.—Tindal.

The king, in addition to the odium of being a foreigner, and governed by foreign counsels, and of increasing his own dominions in Germany, at the expence of England, was now most virulently reviled for having favoured the South Sea act. Well-founded suspicions were formed, that his German ministers and mistresses had received enormous largesses in stock to recommend and promote the project. Most of the principal ministers of the English cabinet, Townshend excepted, were accused of being implicated in the same scandalous traffic, either by themselves or their relations, and had totally forfeited the public opinion.

Chapter 20.

1730 to 1731.

Idle reports were circulated, and believed, that Sunderland * was endeavouring to prevail on the king to marry the duchess of Kendal, with a view to diminish the influence of the prince of Wales; and that he was following the example of his father with James the second, in driving his master to such acts of unpopularity, as might cause a deposition, and establish a republic on the ruins of the throne. A general outcry prevailed, that the king and ministers had leagued with the South Sea company to dupe the nation, and that the remedy for these enormous evils, would be more dangerous than the disorder itself.

Popular clamours.

The public discontents were increased to so great a height, that some of his Hanoverian counsellors suggested the rashest measures †. They advised the king to affect a resignation of the crown to the prince of Wales, and insinuated, that William, his great predecessor, had surmounted the factions of the time by threatening to retire, and leave the country to its fate. As a last and desperate effort, he was recommended to apply to the army to sound the officers, many of whom it was said, had declared, that rather than submit to the establishment of a commonwealth, or a popish competitor, they would assist to render the king absolute. Others were alarmed, and dreaded a misunderstanding between the king and the parliament; deprecated any attempt to apply to the army, opposed the resignation of the crown, by insinuating, that it was not the first time, that a king of England had ruined himself by retiring, with the hope of quelling the fury of the populace; advised rather, that secret applications should be made to the Emperor and the other allies, for troops, if necessary, to defend his person against any rebellious attempts.

In this alarming crisis, the king was pensive and desponding, uncertain how to act, and by whom to be directed.

The king despondent.

* Letters from Count Bernsdorf, and other Hanoverian ministers, among the Townshend Papers.

† Ibid.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Applies to
Walpole.

Fortunately, in this moment of suspense and agitation, the public voice called forth Walpole, as the only man calculated to save the nation from impending destruction. In conjunction with Townshend, he stood at the head of a large party, highly respected for their *tried* integrity; among whom the names of Cavendish and Ruffel were most conspicuous, who had uniformly acted with him; while the dukes of Newcastle, Bolton, Grafton, and many other Whigs, who had united with Sunderland, were now ready to join his standard. He was attached to government by the office of paymaster of the forces; but as he had scarcely taken any part in public transactions, he did not share with administration the general odium. He had acquired great popularity by his uniform opposition to the South Sea act, and by having predicted the evils which were now most severely felt.

Walpole now possessed the power, had he possessed the inclination, to ruin the South Sea company, the directors of which had treated him with many marks of contempt and obloquy, and to wreak his vengeance upon its principal contriver, Sunderland, who by his cabals in 1716, had driven him and Townshend from the helm of government*. He was not ignorant that the Hanoverian junto were dissatisfied with Sunderland. The promises which he had made of obtaining the repeal of the incapacitating clause, were not fulfilled, and when he was reproached for the breach of his word, he had excused himself by alledging, that Walpole, on whom he had relied for carrying the measure through the house of commons, was no longer in administration. Walpole, therefore, was secure of their co-operation, if he had deigned to make overtures to them. He also well knew, that Sunderland had principally promoted the South Sea act, for the purpose of securing, by largesses of stock, a majority in both houses of parliament. He was aware that the minister had never cordially coalesced with him and Townshend, and that as soon as he had strengthened his party by their means, he had formed a resolution to obtain their dismissal.

The affairs of the South Sea company were in so desperate a situation, the popular outcry against the directors so violent, and the general distress so urgent, that he did not want excuses for justifying a refusal to undertake this arduous business.

But Walpole was not of a vindictive temper; he cheerfully sacrificed his own resentment, and though fully satisfied of Sunderland's insidious and overbearing character, came forward to assist in relieving his country from

* Letter from Wm. Pulteney, Correspondence, Period III.

the general calamity. He was fully aware of the numerous embarrassments which opposed his success. To him was enjoined the difficult task of preserving the honour of the king, which seemed contaminated by the notorious avarice and venality of his German followers; of counteracting the unpopularity of the minister, by whose authority and influence the South Sea bill had been framed and carried; of satisfying the sufferers, who loudly appealed for indemnification, without detriment to the public; of drawing the difficult line between too much lenity and too much severity; of reconciling the people to the king, and of calming the discontents, which threatened tumults and insurrections. He did not, however, shrink from the trial; but engaged in the task with that ardour and assiduity which marked his character. After examining various proposals which were submitted to his consideration, he adopted a plan for ingrafting a certain portion of the South Sea stock in the bank and East India company; the first hint of which was suggested by *Jacombe* *, under secretary at war. Having amended the scheme in several instances, and prepared it for public deliberation, he referred it to the king, in a letter †, in which, after expressing his strong sense of the difficulties which he had to encounter, he declared, that he engaged in the undertaking solely in obedience to his majesty's command. The king and cabinet having ratified the scheme, and the monied part of the nation having sanctioned it with their approbation, he came prepared to submit it to parliament.

The moment in which it was publicly known that Walpole, in conjunction with Townshend, was employed on a scheme for the restoration of public credit, a new spirit and resolution seemed to be infused into the nation. The country revived from its late despondency; and his ability for finance was so thoroughly appreciated, that a proposal which he made to the minister on the 19th of November, being agreed to, had such an instantaneous effect, as again to raise the stock from 125 to 200 ‡.

On the meeting of parliament, Walpole had many difficulties to surmount, before he could venture to lay his plan before the house. One of the greatest arose from the zeal of those who were more remarkable for their integrity than their judgment, and whose indignation excited them to adopt such violent resolutions, as without producing any essential benefit to the sufferers, would have occasioned a total destruction of public credit.

* *Jacombe's* letter to Robert Walpole, October 11. Correspondence, Period III. and Walpole's speech, at the end of this chapter.

† Correspondence, Period III.

‡ Letter from William Pulteney to Daniel Pulteney, Correspondence, Period III.—Political State, 1720.

Chapter 20.

1720 to 1721.

Walpole forms a plan for the restoration of public credit.

Restores public confidence.

Period III.

1720 to 1727.

Proceedings
in parlia-
ment.

December 8.

This vindictive spirit displayed itself in the first debate which took place on the king's speech. Pulteney having moved for an address, assuring his majesty that the commons would at this critical juncture proceed with all possible care, prudence, and temper, to inquire into the causes of those misfortunes, and apply the proper remedies for restoring and fixing public credit upon such solid foundations, as might effectually give ease and quiet to the minds of his majesty's subjects: Shippen proposed an addition, after the words "for restoring public credit," "as far as it is consistent with the honour of parliament, the interests of the nation, and the principles of justice." This amendment was warmly seconded; and occasioned a violent debate, in the course of which the directors were stigmatised with every opprobrious appellation which language could suggest. Several of the members urged the most bitter invectives against the act for vesting too large powers in a set of men, whom they called miscreants, the scum of the people*. Sir Joseph Jekyll hoped that all the directors were not equally culpable, but sure he was, that some who were not directors were highly criminal; and trusted that a British parliament would not want a vindictive power to punish great national crimes. Lord Moleworth owned, that there were no laws in being to punish the South Sea directors, but contended that the example of the Romans ought to be followed, who, because their laws were defective, in not having provided a penalty for parricide, made one to punish the crime after it had been committed, and adjudged the guilty wretch to be sewed up in a sack and thrown alive into the Tyber. He concluded, "that as he looked upon the contrivers and executors of the South Sea scheme, as the parricides of their country, he should be satisfied to see them undergo the same fate†."

In the height of this altercation, Walpole remarked, that it was imprudent to begin the sessions with irritating inquiries before they examined the cause; that if the city of London was on fire, all wise men would rush forwards to extinguish the flames, and prevent the spreading of the conflagration, before they inquired who were the incendiaries. In like manner, public credit having received a most dangerous wound, and being still in a bleeding condition, they ought to apply a speedy remedy; and afterwards they might inquire into the cause of the calamity. "For my part," he continued, "I never approved the South Sea scheme, and am sensible it has done a great deal of mischief: but since it cannot be undone, it is the duty of all good men, to assist in retrieving it: With this view, I have already bestowed some thoughts on a proposal to restore public credit, which, in a proper

* T. Brodrick's Letters. Correspondence.

† Political State.—Chandler.

time,

time, I will submit to the wisdom of parliament *." This mild exhortation calmed the house, and the amendment was negatived by a majority of 261 against 103 †. But although he carried his point at this time, yet on the next day, the temper of the house appearing more inclined to severity, he did not attempt to oppose the prevailing spirit; and an addition to the address, "for punishing the authors of our present calamities," being moved, was carried without a division. Chapter 20.
1720 to 1721.

In these debates, it appeared, for the first time, that party had no concern; Whigs and Tories could not be distinguished by their votes. These partialities were suspended, and almost annihilated by various other passions, which produced numberless intrigues. Many of the commons were sincerely touched with the public calamities, or moved by their own private losses: others, dissatisfied with the ministry and court, were pleased to have an opportunity of covering their revenge, with the specious pretence of justice and the public good: some had in view, by their loud and bitter complaints, to increase their own importance, or draw the attention of the opposite party; others, engaged in the secret practices of the South Sea, hoped, by an affected severity, to prevent suspicion. A few there were, who concealed, under the appearance of zeal and indignation, their devotion to some of the principal managers ‡. The party hostile to the established government took advantage of the public indignation, and excited the most violent clamours against those who, like Walpole, opposed extreme severity, and laboured to mitigate the spirit of revenge. Their views were directed to increase confusion and inflame discontent, with the hopes of procuring a majority of the disaffected in the new parliament, and by means of popular insurrections, to hasten the restoration of the Pretender, which they now looked up to as a certain event. Such were the views and temper of parties in the house of commons, which Walpole had to encounter, and such was the spirit of discontent which he had to allay, before he could carry any scheme into execution; and yet it was in the midst of these discordant sentiments, and petulant opposition, that by means of consummate prudence and management, he gradually brought the house to reason and discretion.

A committee was appointed, on the 9th of December, to take into consideration the state of public credit on the 15th, but on the 12th it was moved, that the directors should forthwith lay before the house, an account of all their proceedings; this motion being warmly seconded and supported, was

* Political State, vol. 20. p. 561.

† Journals.

‡ Tindal, vol. 19. p. 379.

opposed

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

opposed by Craggs, Lord Hinchinbroke, and the two Walpoles. The previous question being called for against this delay, Sir Richard Steele argued, that this nation, which two years ago possessed more weight and greater credit than any other nation in Europe, was reduced to its present distress by a few cyphering cits, a species of men of equal capacity, in all respects, (that of cheating a deluded people only excepted) with those animals who saved the capitol, who were now to be screened by those of greater figure, for what reason they best knew, others were at liberty to judge. In reply to an argument against the question, that this vindictive justice so much contended for, would not be effectual, because it would be impracticable to procure a true account of the delinquents' estates, another urged, that all the laws against bankrupts enacted into one against the directors (for so he should call them, as a word that conveyed more obloquy than any other expression) would in his opinion, attain the end proposed*. Horace Walpole, in speaking for the previous question, confessed that the South Sea scheme was weak in its projection, villanous in its execution, and calamitous in its end; but that, in his opinion, they ought to begin with applying a remedy to the evil. Walpole himself did not attempt to make any defence of the directors; but said, "that as he had already declared, he had passed some time upon a proposal for that purpose; he was, however, apprehensive, that if they went on in a warm, passionate way, the scheme might be rendered altogether impracticable: and therefore, he desired that the house would proceed regularly and calmly, lest by running precipitately into odious inquiries, they should exasperate the distemper to such a degree, as to render all remedies ineffectual†."

Prudence of
Walpole.

In reply to this exhortation to mildness, Sir Joseph Jekyll enforced, with uncommon animation, the necessity of an immediate inquiry. He urged, that it was absurd to attempt a cure before they were acquainted with the disorder; and was convinced that the wisdom of the house would not want schemes to apply proper remedies. Walpole, finding that this speech had made a deep impression, did not insist on the previous question, and suffered the original motion to pass without a division. Several resolutions were accordingly carried, ordering the directors to deliver in an account of all their proceedings in relation to the execution of the South Sea act.

So great was the impatience of the commons, that on the 14th, complaints were made of the dilatoriness of the directors; on the 15th some of their accounts were laid before the house; on the 19th, Sir Joseph Jekyll

* T. Brodrick to Lord Middleton, December 13.—Correspondence, Period III.

† Political State for December 1720.—Chandler,

moved for a select committee to inquire into all the proceedings relating to the South Sea act. The motion, however, was dropped, at the representation of Walpole, who observed, as on a former occasion, that public credit being in a bleeding condition, a speedy remedy should be applied, and therefore, any delay would be highly dangerous. This was immediately followed by invectives against stock-jobbers, to whose arts the public calamity was imputed; and a vote was passed, without any opposition, "that nothing can tend more to the establishment of public credit, than preventing the infamous practice of stock-jobbing*."

After passing this vote, which was on the following day formed into a bill, Walpole ventured to sound the temper of the house, in regard to the main question on which his scheme was founded. It was to promote the reduction of the national debt, by retaining that part of the South Sea act which would assist in promoting this end, and his speeches and conduct were uniformly directed to enforce this beneficial purpose. But a mistaken principle of justice and compassion seemed likely to prevent the success of his scheme, or at least retard its effects. With a view to alleviate the sufferers, it was proposed, among other things, to annul the contracts made by the South Sea company, to declare the subscriptions void, and to restore the proprietors of the public debts to their former state, or in other words, to leave the debt of the nation on the same footing on which it stood before the opening of the second South Sea subscription. To enforce this proposal, petitions were presented to the house from several proprietors of the irredeemable debts and lottery tickets, "praying that their case might be taken into serious consideration, and that they might be defended in their just rights against the illegal proceedings of the South Sea company, by forcing them to take stock for their debts, at a much higher rate than it would sell for; and admit them to be heard either by themselves or council, or grant them such other relief, as should be thought fit." This petition was warmly supported by Sir Joseph Jekyll, under the patriotic pretence of asserting public faith, equity, and justice, which had been notoriously violated by the directors.

In opposition to this specious, but impolitic proposal, Walpole explained the views with which the South Sea act was framed, which were to promote the landed and trading interest of the nation, by lessening the incumbrances, and reducing them to a method of being discharged in a few years. This salutary benefit would not, he added, be effected, unless a way had

* Political State for December.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Dec. 19 and
20.

been found to make the annuities for long terms redeemable, which had been happily effected by the South Sea scheme, without a breach of parliamentary faith; and if they could now unravel what had been done, they should not only ruin the South Sea company, but, instead of alleviating, aggravate the present misfortunes; and he added, that if any injustice was done to the subscribers, they were at liberty to seek relief by law *. He then claimed the attention of the committee; and said, "That (as he had before hinted) he had prepared a scheme for restoring public credit, but that the execution of it depending upon a position which had been laid down as fundamental, he thought it proper, before he opened his scheme, to be informed, whether he might rely on the main foundation, that *the subscriptions of public debts and incumbrances, money subscriptions, and other contracts made with the South Sea company, should remain in the present state?* This was the cause of two long and violent debates, after which it passed in the affirmative, by a majority of 232 against 88, with a reservation in these words, "unless altered for the ease and relief of the proprietors, by a general court of the South Sea company, or set aside by due course of law †."

Walpole lays
his scheme
before the
house.
Dec 21.

Having thus gradually smoothed his way, and obtained the avowal of the commons, that the subscriptions of the proprietors of the debt should be considered as valid, he brought forward his scheme; it was, in substance, to engraft nine millions of stock into the bank of England, and the same sum into the East India company, on certain conditions; the remaining twenty millions were to be left to the South Sea company. In his speech, recommending this plan, Walpole studiously avoided the introduction of any speculative topics, or any assertions which were not proved by papers before the house: He promised, and frequently repeated, that he founded his calculations on the veracity of those statements ‡, and by his prudence in that respect, silenced many cavils which must necessarily have arisen from assertions less closely connected with obvious and attainable proof. After a few objections, made by Hutcheson, and some other members, it was ordered, that proposals should be received from the bank of England, and the East India company, for restoring public credit. It met however with a warm, but fruitless opposition from the three companies, because neither derived from it any peculiar advantage; their proposals were

* Political State, vol. 20. p. 586.

† Journals.—Chandler.—Political State.—
Brodrick's Letters. Correspondence, Period III.

‡ Thomas Brodrick to Lord Middleton,
22d December. Correspondence, Period

presented

presented to the house, and a bill framed accordingly. In its passage through the commons, it was in some respects altered and amended; but the principal features were preserved. The chief management of the business was committed to Walpole, and though it was violently * opposed in its progress, yet his prudence and discretion either gave way to the general clamour, or submitted to various amendments, or his weight and eloquence, aided by the influence of government, obtained a majority in its favour: it passed the house of lords, and received the royal assent.

The good effects of Walpole's scheme were counteracted by the petulant opposition of the advocates for indiscriminate severity, and many unjust sarcasms and violent invectives were thrown out against its author. Amongst others, Shippen, the inflexible opposer of lenient measures, observed, that the house had hitherto done nothing towards the restoration of public credit: that indeed, a member of great parts and abilities had, at first, proposed a scheme for that purpose; but that instead of proving an effectual remedy, it appeared at last to be a mere palliative, which had rather inflamed than alleviated the distemper. That by this time the whole injured nation called aloud for vengeance; and if they neglected to hear the voice of the people, it would look as if they had a mind to provoke them to do themselves justice †. It was ever his opinion, that the only effectual means to restore credit, was to call those to a strict account, who had ruined it; and in particular, all such as had applied any part of the public money, intrusted in their hands, in stock-jobbing, and had raised vast fortunes by robbing the nation. He then moved, that an inquiry should be made what public money had been employed in stock-jobbing, or in the purchase of annuities, or other parliamentary securities, by any officer of the revenue, to their own private advantage, since the first day of December, 1719. Sir William Wyndham seconded the motion, and after animadverting on the profuse expenditure of the public money, and allowance of arrears, due to foreign troops, which had been taken into British pay, moved for copies to be laid before the house, of the several warrants and sign manuals, by virtue of which the late commissioners appointed to examine the debts of the army, issued any certificates.

Walpole having expressed his surprise and stated his objection to this motion; Lechmere observed, that he was neither for or against it, but he would freely tell the gentleman who opposed it, that while the nation was under

Chapter 30.

1720 to 1721.

Feb. 22.

Passes the
two houses.

March 22.

April 25.

* February 3, on the first reading, 165 to 118.—January 5, on the motion for adjourning the report, 153 against 140.—January 10, against recommitting it, 267 to 134.—February 7, on the second reading, 237 to 139.

† Chandler.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

the pressure of heavy debts, he must expect that many motions would be made, for the purpose of finding out methods to ease the public burdens. That as that gentleman was now in a higher post than formerly, a great deal more was expected from him; the rather, because the scheme which he had proposed at the beginning of the session, for raising the stocks, and restoring public credit, had not had the desired effect. Walpole, moved at this invective, could not contain his indignation. "It is known, he replied, that I ever was against the South Sea scheme, and have done all that lay in my power to hinder its taking place; but when the mischief was done, and things were brought to such extremities, I thought it my duty, and therefore was willing to try the best method I could think of to extricate the nation out of its difficulties: I do not pretend to *work miracles*, but only to use my utmost endeavours towards retrieving the late misfortunes: with this honest intention I promoted a scheme which had been laid before me *, and appeared the most plausible of any then proposed, for restoring public credit: It cannot be denied, that while that scheme was pursued, it did some good, and kept up the price of stocks; and that they have fallen since it has been laid aside: I never intended however to raise stocks above their intrinsic value, for that would bring us again into the same unhappy circumstances which their extraordinary rise had before occasioned." He then lamented the ill disposition of some persons, who instead of concurring with others in remedying the present distempers, used all possible means to irritate the minds of the people: and concluded with a motion for appointing a day to consider the state of public credit, which was unanimously agreed to.

Although the engrafting scheme was not carried into execution, and was superseded by † the bill which passed at the close of the session, for restoring public credit, yet it produced a beneficial effect, by calming the general discontents, and inducing the proprietors of the national debt, who had severely suffered from the South Sea infatuation, to form hopes of relief from the efforts of parliament.

* By Jacombe, under secretary at war. See † Journals.—Political State for April 1721, note, p. 139. and Chandler.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST;

1721.

Public Indignation against the Directors.—Proceedings in Parliament.—Report of the Committee of Secrecy.—Rigorous Treatment of the Directors.—Bill of Pains and Penalties.—Moderation of Walpole.—Defends Charles Stanhope.—Saves Sunderland.—Promotes the Bill for restoring Public Credit.—Advantages finally derived from the South Sea Scheme.—Arrears of the Civil List paid.—Controversy concerning the Bank Contract.

DURING the period in which this scheme was carrying through both houses of parliament, the loudest and most violent clamours were excited as well against the directors, as against the ministers who had promoted the South Sea act, which was considered as the sole cause of the national distress. The general infatuation in favour of the South Sea company was forgotten; and the frenzy of stock-jobbing was not taken into consideration. All the managers were indiscriminately involved in the same guilt; the very name of a director was synonymous with every species of fraud and villany. Petitions from counties, cities, and boroughs, in all parts of the kingdom, were presented to the house, crying for justice due to an injured nation against the villany of these speculators, and the sufferers looked up for indemnification from the confiscation of their property, or for vengeance in the punishment of their guilt. All those, who like Walpole opposed extreme severity and indiscriminate punishment, were exposed to repeated insults and virulent invectives; they were devoted, both in anonymous letters and public writings, to the speedy vengeance of a much injured people.

Indignation
of the public.

The popular frenzy seized parliament, and influenced their proceedings. On the recess, the house was divided into two parties; the one for applying an immediate remedy to the distress occasioned by the South Sea act, was superior to that for inquiring into the causes of the national misfor-

Parliamentary proceed-
ings.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

April 30.

tunes, and punishing the authors, as the most effectual means of redressing them. To the preponderant party Walpole inclined; and his opinion had great weight in inclining the decisions of the house to the lenient side. But at the meeting after the recess, it immediately appeared, that the vindictive party had gained the ascendancy; and that strong censures were thrown out against some of the leading members of administration. Walpole soon perceived the general inclination of the house; conscious that all attempts, either to persuade or oppose, could only serve to inflame their resentment, and deriving a warning from the intemperate heat of secretary Craggs, he took but a small share in the debates which related to the inquiries into the South Sea project, and the conduct of the directors.

Committee
of secrecy.

Jan. 23.

A committee of secrecy being appointed by the commons, to examine all the books, papers, and proceedings relating to the execution of the South Sea act, the members were chosen from the most violent of those who were advocates for indiscriminate and unrelenting severity. Alarmed at these proceedings, Knight, cashier of the company, who alone was privy to all the secret transactions, escaped from England, soon after his first examination, carrying with him the register called the green book, and it was generally suspected, that he took this step with the connivance of government. The committee having reported this event to the house, the commons ordered the doors to be locked, and the keys laid on the table. General Ross then stated, that the committee had discovered, "a train of the deepest villany and fraud, hell ever contrived to ruin a nation, which, in due time, should be laid before the house." In consequence of this vague assertion, four of the directors, who were members, were expelled the house, and taken into custody. The other directors shared the same fate; all their books, papers, and effects were seized, and the royal assent was given to a bill, for restraining them from leaving the kingdom, discovering their estates, and disqualifying them for holding offices in any of the companies.

Rigorous
proceedings
against the
directors.

Jan. 25.

16 February.
Report of the
committee.

If any thing could justify these extraordinary acts of rigor, it was the re-

* This committee was composed of the following persons:

Thomas Brodrick, chairman.

Archibald Hutcheson, Lord Moleworth,
Sir Joseph Jekyll, Col. Strangways,
Edward Wortley, William Sloper,
Sir Thomas Pengelly, N. Lechmere,

William Clayton, General Ross,
Edward Jefferies, Hon. Dixie Windfor.

The heat and violence of Brodrick, in this inquiry, are sufficiently shewn in his letters: (See Correspondence, Period III.) And the vindictive and acrimonious spirit of the majority of the committee is apparent in their speeches and motions on the subject, in Chandler, the Political State of Great Britain, &c.

port

port of the secret committee; which when presented to the house, exposed a scene of fraud and iniquity almost unparalleled in the annals of history. The committee stated that their inquiry had been attended with numerous embarrassments and difficulties; that in the different books were made false and fictitious entries; entries with blanks, erasures, and alterations, and in some, the leaves were torn out. Some books had been destroyed, others secreted.

Before the South Sea bill was passed, and with a view to promote it, the directors, to whom the secret management was principally intrusted, had disposed of a fictitious stock of £. 574,000; this stock was noted as sold at several days, and at various prices, from 150 to 325 per cent. amounting in the whole to £. 1,259,325, it was to be esteemed as holden of the company, for the benefit of the pretended purchasers, though no mutual agreement was then made for the delivery or acceptance of the stock at any stated time; and no money was deposited, and no security given for the payment. By this contrivance, no loss could have been sustained, if the stock should fall, and the gain would be received, if it should rise.

As this fictitious stock was designed for promoting the bill, the sub and deputy governors, Sir John Blunt, Mr. Gibbon, Mr. Chester, Mr. Holditch, and Mr. Knight, the cashier, had the chief disposal of it, and it was distributed as follows;

To the earl of Sunderland, at the request of		£.
Mr. Craggs, senior	-	50,000
The dutchess of Kendal	-	10,000
The countess of Platen	-	10,000
Her two nieces	-	10,000
Mr. Craggs, senior	-	30,000
Charles Stanhope, esquire	-	10,000
The sword blade company	-	50,000

It also appeared, that Charles Stanhope had received a difference of £. 250,000, through the hands of Sir George Caswal and Co. but that his name had been partly erased from their books, and altered to *Strangape*. That Aislabye, chancellor of the exchequer, had an account with Turner, Caswal, and Co. to the amount of £. 794,451, and that he had advised the company to make the second subscription £. 1,500,000, instead of a million, by their own authority, and without any warrant. That of the third subscription, Aislabye's

list

Period III.

1720 to 1727.

list amounted to £. 70,000, Sunderland's to £. 160,000, Craggs's to £. 1659,000, and Stanhope's to £. 47,000. That on the pawned stock which had been sold, there was, by the means of Mr. Knight, a deficiency of £. 400,000. This report was succeeded by six others, less important; at the end of the last, the committee declared that the absence of Knight, who had been principally, and often solely intrusted, put a period to their inquiries into this black and destructive affair.

Farther proceedings.

In consequence of the first of these reports, the house passed several strong resolutions, after which a bill was brought in for the relief of the sufferers by the South Sea company, the title of which, on the third reading, was changed into a bill for a raising money on the estates of the sub, and deputy governors, directors, cashier, deputy cashier, and accountant of the South Sea company, and of Mr. Aislaby and Mr. Craggs, towards making good the damages sustained by the company, and for disabling such of those persons as were living, to hold any place, or sit in parliament for the future. In consequence of these resolutions, the greater part of the estates belonging to the directors, and to other persons mentioned therein, were confiscated to a very large amount, and applied towards discharging the debts of the company. The estates of the directors alone were valued at £. 2,014,123, the allowance made to them was £. 354,600, the confiscation therefore, amounted to £. 1,659,523. Yet these enormous forfeitures did not satisfy the unrelenting advocates for extreme severity, many of whom expected nothing less than confiscation of all * their property, and several were dissatisfied, because the punishment of death was not inflicted †.

Remarks on the occasion.

An eminent historian has justly remarked, that "the equity of modern times must condemn the arbitrary proceedings which disgraced the cause of justice, by introducing a bill of pains and penalties, a retroactive statute, to punish offences which did not exist when they were committed." "Against a bill of pains and penalties," he observes, "it is the common right of every subject to be heard by his council at the bar; they prayed to be heard, their prayer was refused; and their oppressors, who required no evidence, would listen to no defence ‡."

* Insult was sometimes added to confiscation. On the motion for allowing Grigsby £. 10,000, whose estate was valued at £. 31,687, a member observed, that since that upstart had once been so prodigally vain as to bid his coachman feed his horses with gold, no doubt he could feed on it himself; and therefore he

moved that he might be allowed as much gold as he could eat, and that the rest of his estate might go toward the relief of the sufferers. Political State. June 1721.

† Saint John Brodrick to Lord Middleton, May 24. Correspondence.

‡ Gibbon's Memoirs, p. 11.

Walpole

Walpole however is exempted from this just censure : we have already mentioned his endeavours to stem the torrent of parliamentary vengeance, and to incline the sentiments of the house to terms of moderation ; and although the current of opinion ran violently against lenient measures, yet he did not shrink from avowing his sentiments, when any flagrant act of injustice was going to be committed ; thus, when a motion was made for declaring the estates of Craggs liable to the same forfeitures as those of the directors, and his two sons in law, who were both members of the house, requested to be heard by counsel in right of their wives, as daughters of the deceased ; he strenuously spoke in their favour. For his interposition he incurred censure, and was ironically complimented by Lechmere, as being fully capable to advise them, and to serve them as counsel ; an office he had already performed for so many others. Walpole finding that all appeals to reason and equity were ineffectual, and not willing to irritate the house, prudently returned no answer to this sarcasm, and the request was withdrawn.

At another period, when the directors prayed also to be heard by counsel, Walpole, though he avowed himself conscious, that any thing which might be interpreted in favour of a South Sea director, would be very ill heard, and subject the speaker to great disadvantages ; yet he defended their petition upon the just and obvious principle, that no criminal, however great, ought to be condemned unheard, or deprived of any advantage in making his defence.

The part of these transactions which involved Walpole in the greatest embarrassment, was the necessity of defending the ministry against those attacks, to which their conduct had laid them open, but which, had they been too closely scrutinised, would have occasioned discoveries extremely dangerous in the irritated state of the public mind, and produced changes fraught with danger and portentous of the greatest mischief. Stanhope had been charged by the report of the committee, with having taken, through Knight, £. 10,000 stock, without any valuable consideration, and with having bought, through Turner and company, £. 50,000 stock, at a very low price, by the difference of which he had gained £. 250,000. In proof of these averments, the examinations of Sir John Blunt, Holditch, Sawbridge, and Henry Blunt were read, and they were interrogated at the bar, but their testimony rather detracted from, than strengthened their former depositions ; and it was apparent as to the £. 10,000, that Stanhope had received no stock without a valuable consideration, and that as to the £. 50,000, his name had been used without his privity or consent. Yet the house was so little satis-

Chapter 21.

1721.

Moderation
of Walpole.Defends
Charles Stan-
hope.

Feb. 28.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

March 8.
Aislaby ex-
pelled.

Walpole
saves Sun-
derland.

fied with this exculpation, that though Walpole and his brother Horace exerted great ability in his defence, he was acquitted by a majority of three only, 180 to 177.*

Aislaby's case was so flagrant, and his criminality verified by so many proofs, that, on his first accusation in the house of commons, neither Walpole or his friends attempted to defend him; he was expelled the house, and committed to the Tower. But when the bill was brought in for subjecting his estates in common with those of the South Sea directors, Walpole observed, that impeaching, not billing ministers, was the parliamentary rule of our ancestors, treated the bill as a bill of attainder, and made a strong appeal to the compassion of the house, in favour of his wife and family†. Failing in these efforts, he moved, that such parts of his property as had been in his possession towards the end of the year 1719, before the South Sea bill was brought in, might be exempted from confiscation. This was, however, overruled, and it was finally carried, that all the estate he possessed on the 20th of October 1718, should be allowed to him and his family.

To preserve Sunderland from the same censure which had involved Aislaby, and would have involved secretary Craggs, had he lived, was the great object of the court. But as he was accused by the secret committee of having received, through Knight, £. 50,000 fictitious stock, without having made any payment, or given any security; and as the parliament had in many instances taken presumption for guilt, and appearances for realities, it was no easy matter to turn the sense of the house in favour of the minister, who sat at the head of the treasury when the South Sea act was framed and carried. Under these inauspicious circumstances, Walpole, however, obtained the acquittal of Sunderland.

That part of the report which related to lord Sunderland, being proposed to be taken into consideration, was adjourned till the 15th of March, on the pressing instances of Walpole‡, as necessary for the farther information of the house, that several witnesses who had been examined by the committee, should be re-examined at the bar; as they might vary in their depositions, or give a different explanation to the words, which they had made use of in their examination. Having obtained this point, the object of which was to delay the business, for the purpose of gaining over several of the Whigs, he represented to them, that if they gave their votes against Sunderland, and he

* Thomas Brodrick to Lord Middleton, March 7. Correspondence, Period III.—Political State.—Chandler.—Tindal.

† Brodrick's Letters. Correspondence.

‡ Ibid.

was disgracefully removed, their cause would suffer, and the Tories be called into power. These representations had a due weight, and brought over many to his purpose. The proof of the fact rested principally on the assertion of Knight, before he went off, as given on the oath of Sir John Blunt, who as president of the company, could not be supposed ignorant of the transaction; and who deposed to his having heard the particular declarations of Knight, that such stock had been taken, and a note of acknowledgment given by Sunderland. Of five directors examined at the bar, one could only affirm, that he was aloof with Knight, when it was communicated to him; and two others acknowledged that Knight had informed them of the said circumstances in presence of Sir John Blunt, but could not positively ascertain whether he was within hearing. Walpole, who had in a previous debate on the case of Charles Stanhope, endeavoured to weaken the evidence and illiberally exposed the character of Sir John Blunt, as a fraudulent projector, pursued the same line of conduct with increased asperity. He declared himself authorised by Sunderland to deny the fact, and to avow that no such stock had been taken in his name, and no such note given, and reprobated the idea, that such hearsay evidence should operate to the ruin of the fortune and character of any man.

To Walpole, Sunderland was indebted for his acquittal. His personal weight, his authoritative and persuasive eloquence were effectually employed on this occasion, and, aided by the influence of government, met with success. The minister was acquitted by a majority of 61 votes, 233 against 172.

Having obtained the acquittal of Sunderland, and secured the continuance of the Whig administration, of which he soon became the head, the great object of Walpole was directed to promote the restoration of public credit, which was in danger of being diminished, if not overturned, by the violent proceedings of the commons. In this delicate business he acted with his usual prudence, and though he could not in all instances prevent the adoption of measures which he did not approve, yet he mostly contrived either to delay their execution, or to mitigate their effect by various expedients.

As chairman of the committee, he drew up the address of the com-

* Chandler.—Although the public voice, notwithstanding his acquittal by so large a majority, criminated Sunderland; yet several extenuations may be urged in his favour. For it appears from private documents which have casually fallen under my inspection, that so early as July, he had refused to recommend to the directors any more lists for subscriptions;

that he did not at least enrich himself or his friends; that he expressed great satisfaction, that neither himself or his friends had sold out any South Sea Stock, as he would not have profited of the public calamity.—Letters from Eckerfial and Drummond to Daniel Pulteney, Correspondence, Period III.

Period III. 1720 to 1727. mons to the king; it represented the state of public credit, and recited perspicuously, in a full though summary manner, the confusion and mischiefs which were derived from the execution of the fatal South Sea scheme: It described the cause of those mischiefs, explained the difficulty of applying proper remedies, and mentioned certain resolutions which had passed for re-establishing public credit, remitting £.4,156,341, to the South Sea company, dividing all the remaining capital stock among the proprietors, and preventing stock-jobbing. These resolutions were made the foundation of an act that passed under the title of a bill for making several provisions to restore the public credit, which suffered by the frauds and mismanagements of the late South Sea directors and others.

Address of
the commons.

Bill for restoring public credit.

Tumults in
opposition to
it:

In the passage of the bill through the commons, a daring attempt was made to obtain its rejection, or to frustrate its effects. Though the general disposition of Walpole was mild and temperate, yet in this instance, when threats were employed to awe the legislative body into a compliance, he stood forth the supporter of parliamentary freedom. On the day in which the bill for restoring public credit was to be read a second time, the lobby of the house of commons, and the adjacent places, were filled with a numerous body of proprietors of the short annuities and other redeemable debts, who tumultuously demanded justice of the members as they were passing, and put into their hands a printed letter to a member of parliament, in which the unreasonableness and partiality of binding down the redeemables are fully demonstrated, and a written paper, containing these words; pray do justice to the annuitants who lent their money on parliamentary security. The justices of peace for the city of Westminster, and the constables, were instantly sent for, and the house proceeded to business. Sir John Ward presented the petition of the proprietors of the redeemable funds, praying to be heard by themselves or counsel against the bill. The petition being ordered to lie on the table, the bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed. Sir John Ward then spoke in favour of the petition, and was seconded by Sir Gilbert Heathcote. Walpole observed, that he could not see how the petitioners could be relieved; that the resolutions on which the bill was founded had been approved by the king and council, and been agreed to by a great majority of the house; he therefore moved for the previous question, and adjourning the debate. Brodrick warmly opposed the original motion, and was strenuously seconded by Sandys; but the question for adjourning was carried by a majority of 78 to 29. Meanwhile the tumult continuing, the justices of peace, who attended according to orders, were commanded by the speaker to disperse the rioters, which

Allayed.

which they effected not without some difficulty, and after reading the riot act, many of them exclaiming as they retired, "You first pick our pockets, and then send us to gaol for complaining." On the following day, the bill was laid before the committee, and, after some warm debates, in regard to the price at which the holders of the said subscriptions should take South Sea stock, and the repeal of a clause for compelling the bankers to restore the whole money they had borrowed, which Walpole successfully opposed, was carried in the affirmative, and ordered to be engrossed. On the 7th, it was read the third time, passed, and sent to the lords, and on the 10th received the royal assent.

Chapter 24.
1721.

Bill passes.

This bill for the restoration of public credit, arranged the affairs of the South Sea company in such a manner, that five millions of the seven, which the directors had agreed to pay the public, were remitted. The incumbrances were partly discharged from the confiscation of the forfeited estates; the credit of their bonds maintained, £. 33. 6s. 8d. per cent. were divided among the proprietors; the company was soon in a situation to fulfil its engagements with the public, and two millions were reserved towards the liquidation of the national debt. But the proprietors made such loud and repeated complaints on the hardship of depriving them of these two millions, that the parliament afterwards remitted that sum, which made an addition of £. 6. 5s. per cent.

The spirit by which Walpole was directed, and the principles by which he acted, during the whole progress of this delicate business, are laid down in the speech from the throne, on the prorogation of parliament, which he drew up.

"The common calamity, occasioned by the wicked execution of the South Sea scheme, was become so very great before your meeting, that the providing proper remedies for it was very difficult; but it is a great comfort to me to observe, that public credit now begins to recover; which gives me the greatest hopes that it will be entirely restored, when all the provisions you have made for that end, shall be duly put in execution. I have great compassion for the sufferings of the innocent, and a just indignation against the guilty; and have readily given my assent to such bills as you have presented to me, for punishing the authors of our late misfortunes, and for obtaining the restitution and satisfaction due to those who have been injured by them, in such a manner as you judged proper. I was at the same time willing and desirous, by my free and general pardon, to give

King's
speech on
the proroga-
tion.

• Journals.—Political State for July and August.

X 2

case

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Advantages
derived from
the South Sea
scheme.

ease and quiet to the rest of my subjects, many of whom may, in such a general insatiation, have been unwarily drawn in to transgress the laws."

Thus at length, by the ability, address, and perseverance of Walpole, the fatal project of the South Sea was converted into a national benefit; the distresses are forgotten, and the advantages remain. Although by the remission of the seven millions, the public did not enjoy all the benefits which had been sanguinely expected, yet much greater advantage was derived than is usually supposed. £. 632,698 of long and short annuities were converted into redeemable stock, which at this time bears an interest of only 3 per cent. and the interest on the company's capital was reduced at Midsummer 1727 to 4 per cent. By this the public gained annually £. 339,631, which, calculated at 25 years purchase, was worth above 8 millions†. This reduction was also productive of great use and national advantage; it was a precedent for future arrangements of a similar nature, and in 1724, £. 3,775,027 was also reduced to 4 per cent.

Payment of
the civil list
debt.

In the midst of these distresses, from the decline of public credit, and dearth of money, the enormous profusion of Sunderland's administration, laid Walpole under the necessity of applying to parliament for the discharge of the debts of the civil list, which amounted to no less a sum than £. 550,000. To propose the laying on of new burdens on the people for the discharge of these arrears, in this moment of general calamity, would have been extremely unpopular, and perhaps not practicable. Walpole, therefore, hit upon an expedient which effectually succeeded, without imposing an additional tax on the public at large. It was to make the civil list discharge its own arrears, by deducting six pence in the pound on all payments from the crown, towards raising a fund for liquidating the interest of the sum required. The proposal being, on the 12th of July, laid before a committee of the whole house, Pulteney, who though not in opposition yet began to be dissatisfied with the administration, moved for a deduction of one shilling in the pound, adding, that if this deduction were too much for the present occasion, it might be applied to the discharge of the civil list debts. This motion was carried by 153 voices against 63 ‡. On the 14th, this resolution being submitted to the house, was opposed with greater effect by the friends of administration, and negatived by a majority of 132 against 83 §. The original proposition was then moved, and passed without a division, "That his majesty should be enabled to raise any sum not exceeding £. 500,000, to discharge the arrears and debts due and owing upon the civil list, to his servants and others, by settling a

* Journals.

† Sinclair on the Revenue, Part 2. p. 106.

‡ Political State for July 1721.

§ Chandler.

yearly

yearly fund for payment of annuities, after the rate of five pounds per cent. per annum, out of the civil list revenues, until the same shall be redeemed by the crown; and that his majesty, his heirs and successors, be enabled to make good, for the uses of the civil government, all such money as from time to time shall have been paid thereupon, by causing a deduction, not exceeding six pence in the pound, to be made out of salaries, wages, pensions, or other payments from the crown*." Thus Walpole arranged this delicate business, which he was often heard to say † gave him much embarrassment, and on the successful issue of which he prided himself as much as on any other financial operation which he effected during the course of his administration.

The whole conduct of Walpole in the South Sea business, was sanctioned by both houses of parliament, and approved by the nation in general. No invective was thrown out against him, even by party, except that he had employed the power of government and his own influence in *screening* Sunderland; and that he had endeavoured to prevent the justice of the nation from overwhelming the projectors of the fatal South Sea scheme. For this cause, he was invidiously reviled in the periodical writings and pamphlets of the times, and Saint John Brodrick, in a letter to the lord chancellor Middleton, laments that the interposition of Walpole, whom he stigmatises by the name of the *Screen*, saved the directors from confiscation and hanging. But at the distance of fourteen years, the opposition accused him of having fraudulently proposed the bank contract, and of deluding the unhappy sufferers with false hopes of relief. It was asserted that he took a scandalous advantage of the general calamity, and made the misfortunes of his country the means of enriching himself; that he had preconcerted the project several months before with the bank, and that in order to engage the governors consent, he gave them private assurances of being released from their engagement, if it should prove unfavourable.

This attack on the character of Walpole was managed, in the *Craftsman*, and other antiministerial writings ‡, with all the art and strength which could be supplied by the sophistry of Bolingbroke, and the wit of Pulteney. The charge was also rendered more plausible by the concurrence of Aislabie, who, in conjunction with secretary Craggs, had been considered as the principal manager of the business on the side of government, and was present at the meeting in which the contract was signed. This heinous charge was

* Journals.—Political State.—Chandler.

† From Lord Orford.

‡ Case of the Sinking Fund, *Craftsman* for 1735.

Period III.

1720 to 1727.

answered by the minister himself, and by the writers * in his interest. Without entering into a tedious inquiry on this subject, or attempting to justify the conduct of Walpole in every particular, I shall observe, that on a candid review of the whole controversy, it appears that an accusation urged *for the first time* fourteen years after the fact, when it was impossible for him to recollect all the circumstances, and to justify every part of the transaction, was malicious in itself, and undeserving of credit. It may be also remarked, that the assertions of Aislabe, cannot be admitted as fair evidence in his own cause; and that he falsely arraigned the minister, may be implied from a private letter † written in 1722, in which he frankly confessed his own folly and weakness in promoting the South Sea scheme, and expressed, in the strongest terms, his gratitude for the kindness and lenity shewn to him by government, which he solely imputes to the interference of Walpole.

In regard to the most heinous part of the charge, that he had first induced the bank to accede to the agreement, and "afterwards released them from the obligation, when his own private purposes were served;" the bank contract, it was answered, being precipitately drawn up in the midst of general alarm and despondency, and at the earnest importunity of the ministry and South Sea directors, there could be no collusion betwixt him and the bank; and no blame could attach to him, because the governors refused to fulfil the terms of an agreement they had reluctantly acceded to, which if they had fulfilled, would have involved the bank and South Sea company in equal ruin.

It must not be omitted, that soon after the bank contract was drawn up, and the ingraftment scheme had passed, he was accused of *favouring the bank, in preference to the South Sea company*, that he might sell out the money he had in the bank at an advanced price. But as in reply to this attack, he had publicly declared in the house of commons, that he had not one penny in the bank at that juncture, but possessed a large stock in the South Sea company, his opponents afterwards, in 1735, reversed the accusation, and declared that he had adopted those measures to *favour the South Sea in preference to the bank*, that he might sell out the money he had in that stock at an advanced price. These two contradictory assertions destroy each other, and prove the weakness of both.

* Some Considerations on the Public Funds, Gazetteer for 1735, *passim*.

† Correspondence, Period III.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND:

1721—1722.

Townshend appointed Secretary of State on the Death of Earl Stanhope, and Walpole First Lord of the Treasury, on the Resignation of Sunderland.—Supports the Swedish Subsidy.—Affairs of Sweden to the Peace of Nyßadt.—Domestic Transactions.—Commercial Regulations.—Abolition of various Duties.—Importation of Naval Stores encouraged,—Advancement of national Industry.—Dean Tucker's Eulogium of Walpole.

THE death of earl Stanhope, and the accusation of Sunderland, opened the way to the re-establishment of Townshend and Walpole in their former places: for although Sunderland had been acquitted by a considerable majority, yet the public opinion was too unfavourable for him to be continued in the office of first lord of the treasury. The negotiation for settling the new administration had been entrusted, by Devonshire and Townshend, to the management of Walpole; and it was not without great difficulty that Sunderland, who maintained the most unbounded influence over the sovereign, had been induced, or rather compelled, to consent to the proposed arrangement, and particularly to relinquish the disposal of the secret service money*; but he at length acceded. Townshend had been previously appointed secretary of state on the death of Stanhope. Methuen was made comptroller of the household, Walpole first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, and a new board, consisting of his confidential friends†, was nominated at his discretion.

Almost the first measure of government which Walpole supported in the house of commons after his elevation, seemed to belie his conduct while in opposition, for which he has been bitterly reproached by those writers who perceive no difference between opposing a treaty before it is concluded, and supporting the national honour by adhering to it when ratified.

The death of Charles the Twelfth was the prelude to the pacification of the north; and changed the situation of Sweden, and the system of English

February 4.
Townshend
secretary of
state.

Walpole first
lord of the
treasury.

April 2.
1721.

Supports the
Swedish sub-
sidy.

Affairs of
Sweden.

* Pulteney's Answer to one Part of a late infamous Libel, p. 55.

† Sir George Bailey, Sir Charles Turner, Henry Pelham, Richard Edgcumbe.

Period III.

1720 to 1727.

politics in that quarter. On that event, Charles Frederic duke of Holstein Gottorp, the son of Hedwige, eldest sister of Charles, was the next heir; and if hereditary right had prevailed, would have succeeded to the throne. But the preponderating party in Sweden, espoused the pretensions of Ulrica Eleonora, youngest sister of the deceased monarch, who was married to Frederic prince of Hesse Cassel.

The news of the king's death no sooner reached Stockholm, than the senate repaired to the apartment of Ulrica, and congratulated her on her accession to the throne*; at the same time the new queen declared her consent to renounce that absolute power which Charles the Eleventh had vested in the crown, and which had proved the source of many calamities to Sweden. Her title was soon afterwards acknowledged by the army, in opposition to the remonstrances of the duke of Holstein, who laid claim to the throne as his right by hereditary descent; and the pretensions of his rival were confirmed by the states, which assembled at Stockholm on the 20th of January 1719. In that assembly, count Horn, a nobleman of great distinction and capacity, observed in full senate, and in the presence of the queen, with whom he had concerted the declaration, that both Ulrica and her sister Hedwige had forfeited their title to the crown, because their marriages had not been confirmed by the states. On the meeting of the states, Ulrica delivered a memorial, in which she disclaimed all pretensions, and that the throne being vacant, they might proceed to an election. On this formal renunciation, Ulrica Eleonora was elected by the states, and gave her consent to the new form of government, which rendered the sovereign of Sweden, from the most absolute, the most limited monarch in Europe. The new queen, or rather the senate, who possessed the whole power of government, had sufficient occupation to deliver the country from the dreadful situation to which it had been reduced by a war of twenty years, and to conclude terms of pacification with Hanover, Prussia, Denmark, Poland, and Russia.

Before the death of Charles the Twelfth, a congress had been held in the Isle of Aland, between the Swedish and Prussian plenipotentiaries; and had the Swedish monarch lived, Baron Gortz could have reconciled Peter and Charles, both equally incensed against George the First; and a combined army of Swedes and Russians, after conquering Norway, would have landed in Scotland for the purpose of placing the Pretender on the throne of Great Britain.

* Lagerbring Hist. de Suede.

On the death of Charles, George, though involved in disputes with Spain, yet secure of the co-operation of France, dispatched Carteret and Bassewitz to break up the congress of Aland, and to prevent the pacification between Russia and Sweden, from a dread, lest their union should render his mediation unnecessary, and induce Sweden to decline confirming the cession of Bremen and Verden. Carteret succeeded in his negotiation, and is applauded, though not without regret, by the Swedish historians *, for the consummate address with which he prevailed on Sweden to conclude a separate peace with Hanover, which was followed by a subsidiary alliance with England, under the mediation and guarantee of France.

Chapter 22.
1721 to 1722.

Before the pacification was finally concluded, Sweden suffered severely for breaking off the congress of Aland. The Danes took Marstrand, the Gibraltar of the north, and threatened Gotheborg. Forty thousand Russians landed in different parts of Sweden, and carried havoc and destruction into the kingdom, reduced eight towns, and above 1,300 villages to ashes †. The arrival of the English fleet put a temporary stop to this invasion, and hastened the peace of Sweden with Hanover, Prussia, and Denmark. Carteret, supported by the presence of an English fleet in the Baltic, deluded Sweden ‡ with promises to assist in wresting from Russia the conquered provinces, and prevailed on her to confirm the cession of Bremen and Verden to Hanover; Stetin and the district between the Oder and Pene, to Prussia; to renounce the claims of exemption from the Sound duties, and to engage not to assist the duke of Holstein, should he attempt the recovery of Sleswic. Denmark gave back to Sweden Marstrand, Stralsund, and the Isle of Wismar for 600,000 rixdollars, relinquished her alliance with Russia; and, as an indemnification for the conquests restored, England and France gratified Denmark by guarantying Sleswic §.

Peter, incensed at these treaties, which exposed him singly to the united forces of Sweden and England, did not lose courage, but continued his invasion of Sweden, which the English fleet could not prevent; arrested the English merchants who were settled in his dominions, and his resident in London delivered a strong memorial against the insolent interposition of Great Britain.

In consequence of the Russian invasion, Sweden had recourse to England for assistance. The king sent a fleet into the Baltic, and applied to parlia-

Proceedings
in parlia-
ment.

* Lagerbring, Hist. de Suede.

† Schuidt Russ. Gesch. vol. 2. p. 308.

‡ Lagerbring, Hist. de Danemarck.

§ Mallet, Hist. de Danemarck.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.
June 19.

ment for a subsidy of £. 72,000, according to the terms stipulated by the treaty of alliance. The motion to make good these engagements was violently opposed in the house of commons by Sir William Wyndham, Shippen, and lord Moleworth, who had long resided in Denmark, and who published an excellent account of that kingdom. He ably contended, that the alliance was contrary to former treaties with Denmark and Russia; that it was unjust to insist that Peter should restore his conquests, while other princes retained the spoils of Sweden; and that the only equitable mode of proceeding, was for Prussia to restore Stetin, and the elector of Hanover, Bremen and Verden; he artfully insinuated that the claim to Mecklenburgh was one of the causes which occasioned the rupture with Russia; urged that England ought not to intermeddle with the affairs of the empire; and that the procuring of naval stores was the principal advantage of our trade to the Baltic. To these strong arguments Walpole could only reply, that the subsidy allowed to Sweden and the mission of the squadron to the Baltic had been stipulated by former engagements, which, if not complied with, would affect the national honour. But the chief motive which induced the parliament to grant this subsidy, was the declaration that another would not be demanded, as the preliminaries between Russia and Sweden were wholly settled; yet so strong were the objections to the hostilities against Russia, that the motion for the subsidy was only carried by a majority of 59*.

Peace of
Nystadt.

September.

Sweden deriving no effectual assistance from England, was compelled to receive the terms of peace dictated by Russia; and Peter, refusing to accept the mediation of a power which had offended him, granted, under the guarantee of France, the peace of Nystadt. Sweden ceded to Russia Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, part of Carelia, and the district of Viborg in Finland. In return, Peter restored the remaining part of Finland, paid 2,000,000 rixdollars (£. 500,000) as an indemnification for Livonia, and promised not to interfere in the domestic concerns of Sweden.

During these transactions, Ulrica Eleonora had resigned the crown in favour of her husband Frederick the First, who purchased his election by confirming all limitations of prerogative to which the queen had consented. This transfer of the crown occasioned many discontents, increased the Holstein faction, gave to Peter the Great the means of gaining a strong party in the senate, and enabled him to foment the internal discontents natural to a popular government; it exposed the country to future conflicts in the north, and entailed on the British administration, a series of complicated and difficult negotiations.

* Journals.—Chandler.

Walpole had scarcely settled the business of the South Sea, and restored public credit, when he turned his attention to trade and manufactures, and gave a convincing proof of his liberal and extensive views. On being again placed at the head of the treasury, he found the foreign trade shackled with numerous petty duties and impoverishing taxes, which obstructed the exportation of our manufactures, and lessened the importation of the most necessary commodities. Walpole framed the noble plan of abolishing at once all these restrictions, and giving freedom to the most valuable branches of our external and internal commerce.

The speech delivered from the throne at the opening of the seventh and last session of this ever memorable parliament, in conformity to this plan, is justly praised by Uztariz *, an eminent Spanish writer, as a model of good sense and liberality of spirit. It was drawn up by Walpole, and contains the great outlines of the salutary plan which he had formed for the extension of trade.

"In this situation of affairs, we should be extremely wanting to ourselves, if we neglected to improve the favourable opportunity which this general tranquillity gives us, of extending our commerce, upon which the riches and grandeur of this nation chiefly depend. It is very obvious, that nothing would more conduce to the obtaining so public a good, than to make the exportation of our own manufactures, and the importation of the commodities used in the manufacturing of them, as practicable and as easy as may be; by this means, the balance of trade may be preserved in our favour, our navigation increased, and greater numbers of our poor employed. I must therefore recommend it to you, gentlemen of the house of commons, to consider how far the duties upon these branches may be taken off, and replaced, without any violation of public faith, or laying any new burthen upon my people. And I promise myself, that by a due consideration of this matter, the produce of those duties, compared with the infinite advantages that will accrue to the kingdom by their being taken off, will be found so inconsiderable, as to leave little room for any difficulties or objections.

"The supplying ourselves with naval stores upon terms the most easy and least precarious, seems highly to deserve the care and attention of parliament. Our plantations in America naturally abound with most of the proper materials for this necessary and essential part of our trade and maritime strength; and if by due encouragement, we could be furnished from thence with those naval stores, which we are now obliged to purchase, and bring from foreign

Chapter 22.
1721 to 1722.

Commercial
regulations.

October 19,
1721.

King's
speech.

* Uztariz, Theory and Practice of Commerce, ch. 28. vol. 1. p. 131.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Abolition of
various du-
ties.

Importation
of naval
stores en-
couraged.

Tucker's
eulogium of
Walpole.

countries, it would not only greatly contribute to the riches, influence, and power of this nation, but, by employing our own colonies in this useful and advantageous service, divert them from setting up, and carrying on manufactures which directly interfere with those of Great Britain *."

In consequence of this recommendation, one hundred and six articles of British manufacture were allowed to be exported, and thirty-eight articles of raw materials to be imported duty free.

The other great object recommended in the speech, which regarded the importation of naval stores from the American colonies, was effected in the same sessions. It had long been a matter of complaint, that naval stores, which were principally drawn from the Baltic, were clogged with numerous difficulties, and raised to an enormous price. It was found, on inquiry into the commerce with Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and the Hanseatic towns, that the imports exceeded the exports to the amount of more than £. 200,000; it was proved that since the Russia company had engrossed the trade to that country, the price of tar had been doubled, and it was likewise notorious, that the supplies of naval stores might be prohibited, should England be at war with Russia, and the Czar, with a view to increase his own navy, insist that naval stores should only be exported in Russian vessels. It was an obvious remark, that since these commodities were necessary for the navy, it was impolitic to be at the mercy of a foreign prince, especially as we might be supplied from our own plantations on easier terms, and in exchange for our own manufactures. Such were the motives which induced Walpole to countenance a bill for encouraging the introduction of naval stores, and granting bounties and premiums to the importers of them from our colonies in North America.

It is the observation of a judicious writer †, that the advancements which have been made in shipping, commerce, manufactures, and in all kinds of industry, since the passing of this law, have been prodigious; and it cannot be denied, even by the bitterest enemies of the minister, that this national improvement was principally due to his liberal and enlarged spirit. He adds, "I am persuaded, that impartial posterity will acknowledge, that if ever a statesman deserved well of the public, Sir Robert Walpole was that man." And yet none of the English historians have paid a due tribute of applause to these beneficial exertions of ministerial capacity; while some of them enter, with a tedious minuteness, into a detail of foreign transactions, and echo from one to the other the never failing topic of Hanoverian influence; while they

* Chandler, vol. 6. p. 263.

† Tucker's Theory of Commerce, p. 149.

printed, but never published.—Anderson on Commerce.—Chalmers's Estimate, p. 96.

dwell with malignant pleasure on those parts of his conduct, which in their opinion, prove the ascendancy of influence and corruption; while they repeat the speeches and reproaches of opposition, they suffer these salutary regulations, which ought to render the name of Walpole dear to every Englishman, to be principally confined to books of rates and taxes, and only to be mentioned by commercial writers.

Chapter 22.
1721 to 1722.

Although Sunderland had resigned all his official employments, yet he still retained his influence at court, and never heartily coalesced with the new ministers. He had obtained the appointment of lord Carteret to be secretary of state in the place of Craggs, who died on the 16th of February, and the presidency of the council for lord Carleton, in preference to the duke of Devonshire, who was supported by all the influence of Townshend and Walpole. He fomented a division in the cabinet, and carried several points in opposition to the other members.

Influence of
Sunderland
not diminished.

The conduct of Sunderland at this period, is involved in so much mystery, as to leave his character open to every suspicion. It is impossible to ascertain to what fatal purpose he meant to employ his ascendancy over his sovereign, or to what extremes he might have been driven by his disgust against the prince of Wales; he intrigued with the Tories, and * made overtures to bishop Atterbury. He proposed, at a time when the ferment occasioned by the South Sea scheme was at its extreme height, to dissolve the parliament, and induced the king to sanction his views, by persuading him that there was not money enough in the treasury to secure the return of a Whig majority, and that the Tories, under his influence, would screen the projectors of the South Sea, and suppress all inquiry on the subject. But this dangerous and insidious proposal was over-ruled by the sagacity and intrepidity of Walpole, who represented the extreme danger and impolicy of the measure, and took on himself the charge of finding the sums necessary to support the Whig majority †. Sunderland did not dare to avow any intimate connection with, or preference of the Tories, and was obliged to yield to these arguments and assurances; but the Pretender and the Jacobites certainly, at this time, entertained the most sanguine hopes. Sunderland became a great favourite with them and the Tories, his health was constantly drank ‡ by them, and they affected to be secure of attaining, by his means, the accomplishment of their wishes.

Mystery of
his conduct.

Not all the services which Walpole had performed to his king, to his country, not even his merit in screening Sunderland from the rage of the house of

* Walpole Papers.

† Enough.

‡ Secret Intelligence.—Townshend Papers.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

His attempt
to remove
Walpole, de-
feated.

Death of
Sunderland.

commons, could expiate the crime of having superseded that ambitious and domineering minister at the head of the treasury, who dreaded his abilities and popularity, and who saw in him a rival not unlikely to supplant him in the confidence and favour of the sovereign. Sunderland, jealous of his growing power, determined either to remove him from his situation in the house of commons, or again to obtain his dismissal. Under the semblance of favour, he requested the king to create him postmaster general for life; a lucrative office, which if he had received would have incapacitated him from a seat in parliament, and if he refused, would subject him to the resentment of his sovereign. Contrary, however, to his expectations, George inquired if Walpole had desired it, or was acquainted with it: Sunderland replied in the negative: "then" returned the king, "do not make him the offer, I parted with him once against my inclination, and I will never part with him again as long as he is willing to serve me *." This unexpected demur suspended the designs of Sunderland; and his death, which happened on the 19th of April 1722, prevented his attempts to remove Walpole, which, considering his influence and ascendancy, might have been finally successful.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD:

1722—1723.

Meeting of the new Parliament.—Atterbury's Plot.—Memoirs.—Bill of Pains and Penalties.—Conduct in Exile.—Death.—Tax on the Estates of Roman Catholics, and Non-jurors.

Meeting of
the new par-
liament.

Atterbury's
plot.

THE parliament, in pursuance of the opinion of Walpole, was not dissolved until the 10th of March, a few days before it would have died a natural death. The new parliament assembled on the 19th of October; and it soon appeared, that the promise of Walpole to obtain a majority of Whigs was fulfilled.

During the ferment of the general election, the plot of which bishop Atterbury was the head, was detected, and from the mention of it in the king's speech, it became the first object which engaged the attention of the legisla-

* Horace Walpole to Etough, July 31, 1731. Correspondence, Period III.

ture. As Walpole, from his situation and intelligence, procured the earliest information of this conspiracy, and took an active share in the prosecution, I shall throw together a few anecdotes of bishop Atterbury, and add such new information as can be derived from the Orford and Walpole Papers.

Chapter 23.
1722 to 1723.

Francis Atterbury was born at Middleton, near Newport Pagnel, in Buckinghamshire, in 1662. He received his education at Westminster school, and was from thence elected a student of Christ Church College Oxford. At both places he took indefatigable pains in improving himself, and at a very early period, was distinguished for the elegance of his taste, and his knowledge of classical literature, which he displayed in a Latin version of Dryden's *Abfalom* and *Achitophel*, and a translation of some odes of Horace. In the 24th year of his age he proved his talents in controversial writing, by vindicating Martin Luther, in a publication, which induced Burnet to rank him among those eminent divines who had signalised themselves by their admirable defences of the Protestant religion. On taking orders, he acquired a high reputation by his talent in preaching, and by supporting, against Hoadly and Wake, the doctrines of the high church. Bred up in Tory principles, he wrote in favour of passive obedience, and displayed so much learning and ingenuity, that he was chosen prolocutor of the lower house of convocation, and chiefly managed the affairs in that assembly. A similarity of opinion induced him warmly to espouse the cause of his friend Sacheverel, and he is supposed to have had the principal share in drawing up the masterly defence which the doctor delivered at his trial. He was first patronised by Sir Joseph Trelawney, bishop of Exeter; appointed by the Tory administration of queen Anne, dean of Christ church, and, in 1713, advanced, at the recommendation of the earl of Oxford, to the bishopric of Rochester and deanery of Westminster. At that period he was in such high estimation with the queen and ministry, that he was not unfrequently consulted in points of the utmost importance; he was always inimical to the succession of the Hanover line, and on the death of queen Anne, was accused, by Harcourt, of having offered to assist at the proclamation of the Pretender, in his lawn sleeves; and when Ormond and Bolingbroke declined taking any vigorous step, is reported to have exclaimed, "Never was a better cause lost for want of spirit." It is certain that he was involved in the schemes of Bolingbroke, and a letter from that minister * soon after the queen's death, proves the extreme confidence reposed in him.

Account of
Atterbury.

On the accession of George the First, he received evident marks of coldness from the new sovereign; and on the breaking out of the rebellion, gave

* Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2. p. 651.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

an instance of his disaffection, by refusing to sign the declaration of the bishops, in favour of the crown. He uniformly employed his great eloquence in the house of lords, in opposing the measures of government, and in drawing up the most violent protests. Atterbury was of a restless aspiring temper, and eager to obtain the highest honours of the church, which he would certainly have acquired, had not queen Anne died. The active part which he had taken during her reign, against the succession of the house of Brunswick, and his uniform opposition to the government of the new sovereign, precluded him from all expectations of promotion. But when Sunderland courted the Tories, and made overtures to him as to the leader of the disaffected party, his conduct was so equivocal, that his friends * reproached him with having deserted his principles; and his enemies did not hesitate asserting that he had engaged in a conspiracy against the government, because his demand of the bishoprick of Winchester was rejected. There seems, however, to be no foundation for these reflections; it is probable, that in listening to the overtures of Sunderland, he conceived hopes, that the minister was inclined to promote the cause of the Pretender, and that Sunderland was duped by him, rather than that he was duped by Sunderland. And if we may judge from the inflexibility of his character, there is reason to believe that he rejected all offers of promotion, and was never inclined to desert his party †.

Conspiracy
discovered by
the regent.

It appears from Sir Luke Schaub's correspondence from Paris ‡, that the first intimation of the conspiracy in which he was engaged, came from the regent duke of Orleans, to whom the agents of the Pretender communicated the plot, in hopes of receiving assistance from him, and that he betrayed them to the king of England.

Habeas corpus
suspended.

In consequence of his full conviction of the truth and danger of the conspiracy, Walpole took a very active share in conducting the prosecution: He first mentioned it to the house, when the bill for suspending the habeas corpus act was opposed, and a motion made to limit its duration to six months. This motion being strongly and ably seconded, seemed on the point of being carried, when Walpole laid before the house some particulars of the conspiracy; he said, "That this wicked design was formed about Christmas last; that the conspirators had at first made application to some potentates abroad, for an assistance of 5,000 men: that being denied, they afterwards, about the month of April, made farther application, and earnest instances for 3,000; that being again disappointed in their expectations from foreign assistance, they resolved desperately to go on, confiding in their own strength, and fondly depending on the disaffection of England; and that

* Prior to Swift, April 25, 1721.—Swift's Letters, vol. 2.

† Biographia Britannica.—Article Atterbury.

ry.—Memoirs of his Life prefixed to his Miscellaneous Works by Nicholls.

‡ Hardwicke Papers.

their

their first attempt was to have been the seizing of the bank, the exchequer, and other places where the public money was lodged: that although government had undoubted informations of this plot ever since May last; no persons had been apprehended, because there being then two terms coming on together, they would have had the benefit of the *habeas corpus* act, and their arrest was deferred till the long vacation." He added, "That the traitorous designs against his majesty's person and government had been projecting ever since the death of the late queen; and evident proofs would appear that there had been a meeting of some considerable persons, one of whom was not far off, wherein it had been proposed to proclaim the Pretender at the Royal Exchange; that an exact account of this detestable conspiracy would, in due time, be laid before parliament." He concluded, by observing, "that although it was true, that the *habeas corpus* act had never before been suspended for above six months; yet, as the lords had made this suspension for a whole year, if the commons should propose any alteration, it might occasion a difference between the two houses, which, at this time of jealousy and danger, might be attended with bad effects in foreign courts *." Accordingly the bill was carried by a majority of 246 against 193.

Bills of pains and penalties having been passed against the inferior agents, Plunket, Kelly, and Laver, that of the bishop became the object of general attention. In consequence of the report of the committee, a bill was brought into the house of commons, for subjecting him to banishment and deprivation. On receiving a copy of the bill, he wrote a letter to the speaker, requiring to have the assistance of counsel and solicitors in making his defence, which was granted. Having obtained this indulgence, he laid before the house of lords, a petition, stating that, by an order of their house, no lord might appear by counsel before the house of commons, that he was under great difficulties how to act, and requesting their directions. It was accordingly moved, "That the bishop being a lord of parliament, ought not to answer, or make his defence by counsel, or otherwise, in the house of commons, to a bill there depending." This motion produced an argument of some length, which was terminated by the observation of the duke of Wharton, "That the bishop having already applied to the house of commons, in a letter to their speaker, for counsel, it was preposterous now for him to pray the lords not to give him leave to be heard before the commons, which was the drift of his petition." And upon a second question, leave was given for him to be heard by his counsel, or otherwise, as he might think proper. Left

Chapter 23.

1722 to 1723.

1722.

Bill of pains
and penalties
against Atter-
bury.

March 22d.

25th.

29th.

4th April,

* Chandler.

Period III.

1720 to 1727.

9th.

27th May.

thus to his own discretion, on the day he was expected to have made his defence, he sent a letter to the speaker, stating, "That he should decline giving that house any trouble, contenting himself with the opportunity, if the bill went on, of making his defence before another, of which he had the honour to be a member." The bill having passed the commons, was sent up to the lords, and on the 6th of May, he was brought to the bar to make his defence; he made a long and artful speech himself, and his counsel, Sir Constantine Phipps and Mr. Wynne, displayed great zeal and ability; but the bill finally passed the lords, and received the royal assent *.

The conspiracy in which Atterbury was concerned, and for which he was exiled, has shared the fate of many other plots which have not been carried into execution. It was at the time credited by one party, and disbelieved by the other; and even subsequent writers have, according to their principles, considered it as real or pretended. The public opinion of the minister is sufficiently known from the active part which he took in discovering and counteracting the conspiracy, and his private opinion is detailed in a confidential letter which he wrote to his brother Horace, then envoy at the Hague; about three months before Atterbury was arrested †.

It would be needless as well as tedious to canvass the principal arguments for or against bishop Atterbury. It will be sufficient to observe that the proofs of his guilt, though not derived from positive, but from circumstantial and presumptive evidence, were as strong as the nature of the case would admit of; considering the early period at which the plot was discovered, and the great art and talents of the culprit, they were such as to stamp on the impartial mind, the most indelible conviction. It was indeed a strong proof of the lenity of government, that a bill of attainder was not brought in against him, and that he was only punished with deprivation and banishment.

His popularity;

The commitment of the bishop of Rochester to the Tower, had occasioned great clamours. Under pretence of his being afflicted with the gout, he was publicly prayed ‡ for in most of the churches of London and Westminster, and a print of him was circulated, in which he was represented looking through the grate of a prison, and holding in his hand a portrait of archbishop Laud, with some verses, commiserating his situation, and calling him

----- "a second Laud,
" Whose christian courage nothing fears but God."

* Journals.—State Trials.—Chandler.—
Lords' Debates.—Tindal.—Speaker Onslow
on Opposition, Correspondence, Period IV.

† May 29th, 1722, Correspondence, Period III.

‡ Political State, vol. 4. p. 21.

It was also apprehended, that his removal on board the ship which was to convey him into banishment, would have been the signal of insurrection, but no tumults took place. Walpole, in a letter to Townshend, dated Whitehall, June 20, 1723, thus speaks of his embarkation:

Chapter 23.

1723 to 1728

"The late bishop of Rochester went away on Tuesday. The croud that attended him before his embarkation was not more than was expected; but great numbers of boats attended him to the ship's side. Nothing very extraordinary, but the duke of Wharton's behaviour, who went on board the vessel with him; and a free conversation betwixt his holiness and Williamson*; with menaces of a day of vengeance."

Many reports have been circulated concerning the severity with which Atterbury was treated in the Tower; but upon a candid examination of the facts alledged by the bishop and his friends, we have no reason to imagine that he underwent more rigour than a state prisoner accused of a treasonable conspiracy usually meets with. The following instance of lenity is not generally known. He was arrested in August 1722: The articles of impeachment were brought into the house the 23d of March 1723, passed the house of commons on the 9th of April; he spoke in his own defence on the 6th of May, and on the 27th, the king gave his royal assent to the bill of pains and penalties. During the interval between his impeachment and condemnation, several chapters were permitted to be held, under his auspices as dean of Westminster, and the subdean was allowed to act as his proxy. During the month of May, not less than eight chapters were held for signing leases, and on the 31st, it was agreed "That the lease of the manor of Pensham be now sealed and lie in the chapter clerk's hands as an escrole, till the bills he has sent up for the fines are due and paid, this being the last chapter likely to be held till another dean be made, and that the present dean have his proportion of the fine †." This unusual mode of proceeding, by which a very considerable fine was, before payment, reserved for Atterbury, was entirely owing to the connivance, if not to the interference of government, for it is a well known fact, that the bishop of Rochester had offended the chapter by his overbearing behaviour.

Atterbury received the tribute of applause from the first poets of his time: Swift, Pope, and Gay have not omitted to pay high encomiums to his talents and learning. Gay observes, in his Epistle to Pope,

Highly
esteemed by
Pope, &c.

"See Rochester approving nods his head,

"And ranks one modern with the mighty dead."

* Governor of the Tower.

† I am indebted for the communication of these particulars, taken from the Chapter Books,

to a friend who is a prebendary of Westminster.

Period III.

1720 to 1727.

Pope, in his Epilogue to the Satires, describes his unshaken firmness and resignation in the hour of prosecution:

"How pleasing Atterbury's softer hour;

"How shines his soul unconquer'd in the Tower."

Pope and Swift kept up a constant correspondence with him during his exile, and always expressed the highest sentiments of veneration and respect for his character. Pope, in particular, almost idolised his banished friend, and was fully convinced of his honour and integrity, and that he was of a mind too noble to be led by the spirit of vengeance to cabal against his country.

How ignorant Pope was of his real character, and how much Atterbury belied his admirable portrait of a good and wise man in exile*, neither acting from a principle of resentment, or impelled by revenge, was proved by his subsequent conduct. He had no sooner landed on the Continent, than he threw himself into the service of the Pretender, and became the principal agent of his affairs, first at Brussels, and afterwards in France.

The advocates of Atterbury have in vain endeavoured to deny or palliate this fact; and to impress a belief that he never attempted to excite a rebellion in England; and that for the purpose of avoiding solicitations from the Jacobites, he quitted Paris, and went to Montpellier in 1728, where he resided above two years†: but the contrary is proved from the most unquestionable evidence, from his private correspondence with the rebels in Scotland, in 1725, published by Sir David Dalrymple; from the repeated accounts transmitted by Horace Walpole, during his embassy at Paris; from the information of spies, who discovered his cabals, and from the correspondence between him and his son-in-law Mr. Morice, of which extracts are given in the second volume. It appears also, from his own account‡, that he quitted managing the affairs of the Pretender in 1728, from disgust, and not from principle.

Cabals with
the Jacobites.

In fact, Atterbury was of too aspiring a temper to act a secondary part: he expected to have been the principal manager of the cabals in France, and to have been employed in carrying on the correspondence with the disaffected in England. But on finding that lord Mar and Dillon were more trusted than

* Letter from Pope to Atterbury, Pope's Works, vol. 5. p. 354.

† Miscellaneous Works of Bishop Atterbury, by John Nichols.

‡ Letter from Bishop Atterbury to Mr. Morice, Epistolary Correspondence, vol. 4. p. 161.

himself,

himself, he endeavoured to undermine their influence. With this view he entered into cabals with Murray and Hay, whose wife was the Pretender's mistress, and the cause that his consort, the princess Maria Clementina, had retired into a convent, and publicly demanded a separation. Although Atterbury was scandalised at the Pretender's inconsistent conduct, and disgusted with the influence of Hay, yet he meanly condescended to join in intrigues with him and Murray, justified the Pretender, reviled his consort, and predicted that she would repent of her indiscretion when her husband was restored to the throne of his ancestors, which event his sanguine expectation again led him to consider as not far distant. He had no sooner succeeded in destroying the influence of Mar and Dillon, than he became jealous of Hay and Murray, reviled the Pretender, justified his consort, and retired from Paris, expressing a conviction that the follies and vices of his attainted sovereign excluded all hopes of effectually serving him. During his residence at Montpellier, he affected a love of retirement, and a fondness for the calm pleasures of a country life; but in the midst of these philosophical reveries he did not relinquish his cabals for supplanting Hay and Murray, and after a year's continuance at Montpellier, returned to Paris for the purpose of completing his scheme *.

At this period his conduct was remarkable for duplicity: for while he seemed absorbed in projects for obtaining the ascendancy in the court of the Pretender, he was looking forwards to England with fond expectations of an act of grace. Soon after his return to Paris, he held frequent conferences in the Bois de Boulogne, with the Duchess of Buckingham, natural daughter of James the Second, for the ostensible purpose of giving her advice concerning the education of her son. The real object of these conferences was not discovered until her arrival at Rome, when she prevailed on her brother to remove Hay and Murray, and invest Atterbury with the principal management of his affairs in France. His sanguine expectations soon led him to anticipate the fall of Sir Robert Walpole, whom he always considered as the greatest support of the reigning family; and whose disgrace, he thought, would be followed by the ascendancy of the Jacobite party in England, and the restoration of the Stuarts †.

Notwithstanding his boasted philosophy, Atterbury passed his time in exile, in a manner which reflects no credit on the firmness of his mind, or the purity of his principles. The restlessness of his temper, his aspiring ambition, his constant cabals, his anxious desire to return, the narrowness of his income, com-

His conduct
in exile;

* Secret Intelligence from Paris; Orford and Walpole Papers.

† Ibid.

pared

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and death.

Steadiness to
the Protestant
religion..

His papers
deposited in
the Scots
College.

pared with his former opulence, and the continual defection of his partizans in England, preyed upon a mind like his, fed with hopes which were constantly disappointed, and stung with resentment which could not be gratified. His situation was embittered by the ill conduct of his son, and by the death of his beloved daughter Mrs. Morice, who expired in his arms, and of which sad event he has given a pathetic account in a letter to Pope. He died at Paris, on the 15th of February 1731, in the 70th year of his age.

One fact highly honourable to him, ought not to be omitted; he remained, at all times, true to the Protestant religion, and regular in the performance of its duties. He reprobated with warmth, the conduct of the duke of Wharton, lord North and Grey, and others, who had sacrificed their religion with a view to obtain the Pretender's favour; he even quarrelled with the Duke of Berwick, who proposed giving a Catholic preceptor to the young duke of Buckingham, and used his influence over the duchess, to place none but Protestants about the person of her son.

A short time before his death, Atterbury was alarmed, lest his papers should fall into the hands of government, and that their contents should endanger some of his correspondents. Several of the most secret he destroyed, and with a view to secure the remainder, he applied to the English ambassador, lord Waldegrave, to affix his seal on them, that they might be delivered to his executors*. But lord Waldegrave declined this delicate exertion of his diplomatic privilege, alledging that Atterbury was not intitled to the rights of a British subject. His motives for this refusal were derived from an unwillingness to place himself in the embarrassing situation of receiving orders from his own court, to deliver up the confidential deposit of an exile. Atterbury then applied to the French government, but some difficulties arising, he withdrew his solicitation, and died before he had made an effectual arrangement. On his death, John Sample, a spy in the pay of government, who lived in habits of intimacy with the bishop, endeavoured to obtain possession of the papers, for the ostensible purpose of sending them to the Pretender; but the friends of the deceased interposed; the papers were sent to the Scots College, and the seal of office affixed. Morice, his son-in-law and executor, obtained all those which related to family affairs, and the remainder were left in the college. On his return to England, his papers were seized, and Morice was examined before the privy counsel. Several of these documents, with the marks of office, are preserved among the Orford papers; they contain part of the correspondence between the bishop and his son-in-

* Correspondence, Period III. Article Atterbury.

law, several miscellaneous articles in Atterbury's hand-writing, and some letters from William Shippen, relating to the character of Hampden, in Clarendon's History, which Oldmixon accused Atterbury, bishop Smalridge and Dr. Aldrich, of having interpolated, to which accusation the bishop published a satisfactory answer *. From these papers a selection of the most curious articles is given in the correspondence.

Chapter 23.

1720 to 1723.

The bishop's body was conveyed to England, for the purpose of being interred in Westminster Abbey. On its way the hearse was stopped, and his coffin opened, which occasioned a great outcry against the ministers, as if their vengeance continued to pursue him even after death; but it soon appeared that this indignity proceeded from the custom-house officers, who had information that a considerable quantity of brocades, and other prohibited goods, was concealed in the coffin. This search being effected, the hearse was suffered to proceed without molestation, and the body, after some difficulty, was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Buried in
Westminster
Abbey.

Soon after the suspension of the habeas corpus act, Walpole introduced a bill for raising £. 100,000, by laying a tax on the estates of Papists, which was afterwards extended to all Non-jurors. The liberal spirit of the present age, condemns a measure which tended to increase the disaffection of a large body of subjects, and which the arguments advanced by the minister in its favour were calculated only to palliate, but could not justify. For on being urged by several members, and particularly by Onslow, who declared his abhorrence of persecuting any set of men because of their religious opinions, Walpole represented "the great dangers incurred by this nation since the reformation, from the constant endeavours of Papists to subvert our happy constitution and the Protestant religion, by the most cruel, violent, and unjustifiable methods; that he would not take upon him to charge any particular person among them, with being concerned in this horrid conspiracy: That it was notorious that many of them had been engaged in the Preston rebellion, and some were executed for it; and the present plot was contrived at Rome, and countenanced in popish countries; that many of the Papists were not only well-wishers to it, but had contributed large sums for so nefarious a purpose, and therefore he thought it but reasonable they should bear an extraordinary share of the expences to which they had subjected the nation †". Whatever opinions may be formed of this measure, according to the strict rules of theoretical justice, the policy was unquestionable. This instance of rigour effectually discouraged the Papists from continuing their attempts against the government, and operated as a constant check on the turbulent spirit of the Non-jurors.

Tax on Ro-
man Catho-
lics.

Nov. 23.

1722.

* The bishop's Vindication is printed in Atterbury's Epistolary Correspondence, by Nichols, vol. 3.

† Chandler.

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CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH:

1723.—1724.

Walpole's Son made a Peer.—Character, Views, and Intrigues of Carteret.—Struggle in the Cabinet for Pre-eminence.—Contest for continuing or removing Sir Luke Schaub.—Mission of Horace Walpole to Paris.—Death of the Duke of Orleans.—Successful Efforts of Townshend and Walpole.—Schaub recalled, Horace Walpole nominated Ambassador.—Change in the ministry; Carteret appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.—Unanimity in Parliament.—Walpole made Knight of the Bath and Garter.

June 10.
Walpole declines a peerage.

His son created a baron.

IN this year the king rewarded the services of Walpole, by creating his son a peer. Hitherto it had been customary for those who were intrusted with the chief direction of affairs, to be placed in the house of lords; and the same distinction had been offered by the king to him; but conscious that his talents were best calculated for the house of commons, and that his consequence would soon decline if he was called to the upper house, he waved the dignity for himself, but accepted it for his son, who was created baron of Walpole, in the county of Norfolk. The patent takes notice of this circumstance in a manner highly honourable to the minister: "Our most beloved and most faithful counsellor, Robert Walpole, first commissioner of the treasury, with the assistance of other select persons, and chancellor of our exchequer, having highly recommended himself to our royal favour, by his many services to us, to our house, and to his own country, we did not think him unworthy to be advanced to the rank of the peers of this realm; but though he rather chuses to merit the highest titles than to wear them, we have however thought fit, in order to ennoble his family, to confer on the son the honour due to the father, and to raise to the peerage Robert Walpole, junior, esquire, &c*.

The deaths of Stanhope and Sunderland seemed to remove all obstacles to the power of Townshend and Walpole, who now became the great leaders of the Whigs, and being strictly united both in blood and interest, concentrated

* Tindal, vol. 19. p. 494.

in themselves the favour of the crown, and the confidence of their party. Yet notwithstanding these auspicious appearances, their authority was by no means established on a firm foundation; for besides the opposition, they had to struggle against lord Carteret, who covered, under the appearance of devotion and friendship, inimical designs, and united great talents with the most aspiring ambition.

Chapter 24.
1723 to 1724.

John lord Carteret, was son of George lord Carteret, by lady Grace, daughter of John, the last earl of Bath, of the line of Granville. He was born in 1690, and succeeded his father in the title when he was only in the fifth year of his age; he was educated at Westminster school, and removed from thence to Christ Church college Oxford. He made such an extraordinary progress in his classical studies as induced Swift to reproach him, in his humorous stile of panegyric, with having carried away from Oxford, more Greek, Latin, and philosophy than became a person of his rank*. To classical erudition he united a knowledge of the modern languages, and every species of polite literature. He had no sooner taken his seat in the house of peers, than he distinguished himself by an ardent zeal for the Protestant succession, and on the accession of George the First was appointed lord of the bed-chamber.

Character
and views of
Carteret.

On the schism of the Whig ministry, in 1717, he attached himself to Sunderland; was appointed, in 1719, ambassador extraordinary at Stockholm, concluded the peace between Sweden, Hanover, and Prussia, which finally annexed Bremen and Verden to the electorate of Hanover; and mediated a reconciliation between Sweden and Denmark. Soon after his return to England, he was promoted, on the death of Craggs, to the post of secretary of state for the Southern department, and divided in the cabinet with Sunderland and Stanhope, to whom he owed his elevation, against Townshend and Walpole. He was esteemed one of the most eminent speakers in the house of lords, for dignity of manner, propriety of elocution, and force of argument, although his diction was often censured as too florid and metaphorical. He acquired great favour with the king, by his capacity for business and indefatigable application; by his perfect knowledge of foreign affairs; by the facility with which he conversed in French, Italian, and Spanish, and by an acquaintance with the German, which he studied with a view to ingratiate himself still farther with his sovereign.

On the death of Sunderland, he seems to have hesitated whether he should form, in conjunction with Cadogan and Carleton, a party separate from that of Townshend and Walpole, or coalesce with those ministers. He was more

His influence
with du Bois.

* Vindication of Lord Carteret, from the charge of favouring none but Tories, Swift's Works, vol. 10. p. 334.

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1720 to 1727.

particularly useful at this juncture, because he had succeeded to the influence which earl Stanhope possessed in the cabinet of Versailles, by means of du Bois, who was gratified with a large pension, and who had been raised, by the artful management of the earl of Stair, to the office of minister for foreign affairs. Du Bois was no sooner nominated to this post, than he contrived to appropriate to himself the management of the most secret transactions. All affairs of importance passed through his hands alone; and the members of the respective councils were dismissed *. Stair, who had conducted the negotiations at Paris with great address, having quarrelled with Law, who then directed the affairs of finance, and in conjunction with du Bois governed the regent, Stanhope himself repaired to Paris, and arranged in person with the regent and du Bois, the plan of future intercourse and correspondence. Stair was recalled, and succeeded by Sir Robert Sutton †. The failure of the Mississippi scheme, which reduced France to a state of bankruptcy, and the disgrace of Law, increased the ascendancy of du Bois, and his nomination to the archbishopric of Cambrai, was furthered by the express interposition of George the First ‡.

On the death of earl Stanhope, du Bois was under great alarm, lest the new ministers should not treat him with the same confidence; and was fully aware that his credit with the regent would cease, if the good understanding which had been recently maintained between England and France should be diminished. He was, however, soon undeceived; lord Townshend, the new secretary of state, expressed his resolution in a letter § to du Bois, of maintaining the friendship between the two kingdoms, and paid particular compliments to him, as the person who had first promoted and concluded the alliance, which had been so highly beneficial to both parties.

Sends Sir
Luke Schaub
to Paris.

On the death of Craggs, and the removal of Sunderland, the apprehensions of du Bois were again revived and increased by the reports of disunion in the British cabinet, and by exaggerated accounts of the desperate state of affairs in England, from the failure of the South Sea scheme; the regent also experienced the ill effects of these rumours, from the violent opposition made to his measures by the parliament of Paris, in conjunction with those who considered the alliance with England as no less dishonourable than detrimental. For the purpose of removing these alarms, Sir Luke Schaub was deputed to Paris by Carteret. Schaub was a native of Basil, and had been the confidential secretary of earl Stanhope, through whom his first corre-

* *Memoirs de Du Clos*, tom. 1. p. 408.

† *Harwicke State Papers*, vol. 2. passim.

‡ *Du Clos*.

§ *Townshend Papers*.

spondence and connections with du Bois had been principally conducted. On the reconciliation with Spain, in 1719, he had been sent to Madrid, where he remained till the arrival of William Stanhope, afterwards earl of Harrington. Soon after his return to England, he repaired to Hanover, and was employed by earl Stanhope in keeping up the harmony * between the two courts, and dispelling the doubts and suspicions which occasionally prevailed on both sides. On the death of Stanhope, he was considered by Carteret as the fittest person to repair to Paris.

The arrival of Schaub gave great satisfaction to du Bois, who placed no reliance on Sir Robert Sutton; and who expressed a conviction, that he should not long maintain his credit with the regent, if the confidence which that prince had hitherto reposed on the king of England should be destroyed. Schaub easily convinced the regent of the king's steadiness to his former engagements, and thus supported the authority of du Bois. Sutton was soon afterwards recalled, Schaub solely managed the affairs of England, and his influence increased, as du Bois was successively created, by the interposition of England, cardinal and prime minister. During these transactions, Schaub became the channel through whom the cabals of the Jacobites, and the intrigues of Atterbury were communicated to the British cabinet.

Du Bois transferred his devotion to Carteret, as the minister who was supported by Sunderland, and who boasted that he had succeeded to the influence as well as to the principles of Stanhope: Schaub described him as the person who principally directed foreign affairs; and the friendship of du Bois, whose good-will at this period was highly prized, increased the consequence and promoted the interest of Carteret.

On the death of Sunderland, du Bois offered, through Schaub, to use his interest with George the First in favour of Carteret, but strongly advised him to coalesce with Townshend and Walpole, because he would on one side find it difficult to place himself at the head of the Whigs, and on the other, it would be dangerous to throw the king into the arms of the Tories. In reply to these offers of assistance, Carteret expressed his gratitude to the cardinal, and informed Schaub, that he had previously resolved to act in that manner, as well with a view to promote the king's service as his own particular interest. He boasted, that he was sufficiently strong to have no apprehensions but those which arise from the common danger to which ministers are subject; he added, that his principles would never change, and intreated him to convince the cardinal, that were he not fully persuaded of the good

* Correspondence between Lord Carteret and Sir Luke Schaub, Hardwicke Papers, May 1722.

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1720 to 1727.

Carteret
forms a divi-
sion in the
cabinet.

Promotes the
views of the
countess of
Platen.

intentions of his colleagues, he would not continue long united with them.

Notwithstanding these professions, Carteret never cordially coalesced with Townshend and Walpole; he considered himself as succeeding to the interests of Sunderland and Stanhope, expressed, in his letters and conversation, the profoundest veneration for their memory, headed the remnant of their party in the British cabinet, and caballed with the leaders of the Tories, whom he confidently assured of success, by declaring that he was supported by those who governed the king. He was led to make this declaration, which he implicitly believed, because he had secured the concurrence of Bothmar and Bernsdorf, and had gained the countess of Darlington, and her sister, the countess of Platen, whose influence in the Hanoverian councils he considered as predominant. With a view of effecting his purpose, he adopted a proposal, made by Schaub, of a marriage between Amalia, daughter of the countess of Platen, and the count de St. Florentin, son of the marquis de la Vrilliere, secretary of state, which was arranged under the condition, that George the First should obtain from the duke of Orleans, through the means of cardinal du Bois, a dukedom for the family of la Vrilliere. The king eagerly favoured the scheme, and likewise commissioned Schaub to use his name, provided he was secure that the request would not be rejected, and that du Bois could facilitate the grant of the dukedom, without offending those families who aspired to the same honour.

Having thus obtained the concurrence of the king, Carteret entertained the most sanguine expectations, that the management of this secret transaction, confined to him and Schaub, would increase his influence in the cabinet; yet as it was soon known to many persons, he was alarmed lest some rumours should be circulated, and he communicated a part of the business to lord Townshend, but contrived to retain the negotiation entirely in his own hands. With that view he desired Schaub to confine the confidential account to his private correspondence, and in his ostensible letters, to touch upon that affair only in general terms, and to do it in such a manner and with such a *naïveté* as should make it appear as if he had not received any particular order on that subject †. These private communications were constantly shewn to the king, who expressed his satisfaction in the highest terms of approbation.

Promotes vi-
gorous mea-
sures against
Russia.

Carteret also drew from the aspect of northern affairs, high expectations of increasing his influence, by fomenting the king's resentment against Russia,

* May 4, 1722. Hardwicke Papers.

† Ibid.

by flattering his inclination to interfere in the affairs of Sweden, and by favouring the opinions of those Hanoverian ministers, whose advice appeared to him to have weight in the councils of the German cabinet.

Since the treaty of Nyftadt, which restored peace to the North, the only subject of alarm, on the side of Hanover, was derived from the support which the Czar gave to the duke of Holstein, both in his attempts to obtain the crown of Sweden, and to recover the duchy of Sleswic. Peter, proudly conscious of his strength and resources, and of the formidable marine which he had created in the Baltic, formed the most extensive designs of aggrandisement, and promoted every measure which might embarrass George the First. He had assumed the title of emperor, which the European powers refused to acknowledge. He affianced his daughter Anne *, whom he probably designed for his successor, to the duke of Holstein, and sent to Copenhagen an ambassador, to require that Sleswic should be restored to the duke of Holstein, and that his subjects, in the provinces conquered from Sweden, should be exempted from the payment of the Sound duties. When Frederic the Fourth rejected these demands, Peter fitted out a naval armament, assembled a body of troops on the frontiers of Courland †; and a new war seemed on the point of being kindled in the North. George the First, who by the treaty of Travendahl, had been constituted a guarantee of Sleswic, was bound to succour his ally Frederic; he accordingly concerted the most efficacious means of defence; an English Squadron again appeared in the Baltic, and joining the Danish fleet, suspended the operations of Russia, and Peter afterwards turned his views to Sweden, where the weakness of the government, and the fury of contending factions, gave him the fairest prospects of success.

Such was the general state of Carteret's hopes and intrigues, when the king repaired to Hanover. Townshend had not forgotten that his removal, in 1716, had been principally owing to his continuance in England, by which means a full scope was given to the cabals of Sunderland, and the Hanoverian junto. He was unwilling to fall again into the same error, and accompanied the king. Although it was unusual for both secretaries of state to be absent at the same time, yet Carteret had rendered himself so agreeable, and his presence was thought so necessary for carrying on the negotiation with Schaub, for the marriage and the dukedom, that he received orders to repair to Hanover, and Walpole was appointed to act as sole secretary of state in England, during the king's absence.

* See Travels in Russia, Book 4, chap. 10.

† Mallet, Hist. de Dannemarc.

Chapter 24.

1723 to 1724.

ed. 1724.

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ed. 1724.

ed. 1724.

ed. 1724.

1721.

Arrival of the
king at Han-
over.

Soon

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1720 to 1727.

Struggle between
Townshend
and Carteret.

Townshend
gains the
duchess of
Kendal.

Soon after their arrival at Hanover, the two secretaries of state made a violent struggle for pre-eminence.

Townshend had a difficult and a delicate part to act. He was conscious of Carteret's eminent abilities, and of his high favour with the king; he was not ignorant of his successful intrigues with Bernsdorf and Bothmar, and of having conciliated Lady Darlington and the countess of Platen, whose influence he sufficiently appreciated; he was aware that Carteret was eagerly inclined to promote the king's German measures, and that he would be seconded in all his schemes, by the powerful co-operation of the Hanoverian ministers. He felt the necessity of employing intrigue against intrigue, and manœuvre against manœuvre; he laboured effectually to secure the duchess of Kendal, whose ascendancy over the king, fatal experience had demonstrated to be predominant; he fomented the jealousy which she had long entertained, lest the projected marriage should furnish the countess of Platen with a pretence for going to Paris, and from thence to England, and he succeeded so far in gaining her good graces, that he calls her, in his most private letter to Walpole, "the good duchess, and their fast friend". He also obtained the concurrence of lady Walsingham, who possessed great influence over the duchess, and no inconsiderable favour with the king. Relying on these supports, he procured the disgrace of Bernsdorf, and rendered ineffectual the intrigues of Bothmar, who made an unexpected visit to Hanover with a view of aiding Carteret. He obtained the appointment of Hartenberg to the post of minister of state; broke the union which had hitherto subsisted between him and the duchess of Kendal, and rendered them both subservient to his views. He counteracted Carteret in all his measures, obtained the nomination of several places in opposition to his particular recommendation, and so triumphantly carried all before him, that he boasted, in a letter to Walpole, of the success of his political campaign at Hanover, which, in stating the difficulty of his situation, he described as the only place in the world where faction and intrigue are natural and in fashion*.

The superior influence, however, of Townshend and Walpole, was not solely gained by court intrigues, or by the corruption of German favourites, and was not prostituted by a preference of Hanoverian interests to those of England. In the midst of these cabals, the conduct of the brother ministers was firm and manly, moving in direct opposition to the king's prejudices, and the wishes of the German junto. Townshend prevented the adoption of violent measures against Russia, proposed by Bernsdorf and seconded by Carteret,

* See Correspondence.

which

which if pursued, must have involved England in hostilities with the Czar; and he exultingly informed Walpole, that the king continued true to his resolution of signing no paper relating to British affairs, but in his presence. Chapter 24.
1713 to 1724.

The continuance of their authority was also greatly owing to the prosperous state of domestic affairs. The revival of the national credit, and the tranquillity established by the suppression of Atterbury's plot, which reflected great honour on the sagacity and spirit of the ministers, and gave weight and dignity to the councils of England in all parts of Europe, made a deep impression on the mind of the king; and it reflects high honour both on the sovereign of whom it was said, and on the ministers by whom it was said, that the only method of preserving their power beyond fear of competition or accident, was to form some salutary plan for the ease of the people and the benefit of trade, which points the king had much at heart.

The character and conduct of Walpole, were no less instrumental in forwarding the triumph of his party. The beneficial consequences resulting from his commercial regulations had been too obvious to escape notice; his genius for financial operations, and the ease with which he obtained parliamentary supplies, had induced the king to say that Walpole could create gold out of nothing†. But he did not earn this confidence by mean concessions and base flattery; on the contrary, he ventured to contradict the wishes and prejudices of the king, whenever those wishes or prejudices seemed to militate against the true interests of England. An indubitable proof of this fact appears from the correspondence of this year; the king having requested £. 200,000 for the purpose of opposing the efforts of the Czar, to dethrone the king of Sweden, and place the duke of Holstein on the throne, Townshend strenuously exhorted Walpole to procure that sum. In reply, Walpole declared that the £. 200,000 was reserved for the king's expenses, if he staid at Hanover later than Christmas. He must, therefore, either return to England sooner than he had proposed, or the interference in the Swedish affairs must be relinquished. Walpole at the same time represented his objections to that interference in the strongest terms; explained his own conduct, and the great principle by which he appears to have been uniformly directed, which was to be economical of the public money, but to spare no expence when the security of his country was at stake; to avoid foreign entanglements, not to be precipitate in contracting new engagements; to feel the pulse of the nation before any measure of consequence

Assisted by
Walpole.

* See Correspondence, Period III. † Etough, from Scrope, Correspondence, Period IV.

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1720 to 1727.

was adopted, and to proceed with due caution. He concluded by observing, that the prosecution of a new war would effectually prevent the adoption of all schemes for the ease of the people and the benefit of trade. The king, so far from being displeased with this freedom, was convinced by his arguments, adopted his views, and declared his resolution of implicitly following the advice of his British cabinet: He spoke of him in the highest terms of approbation, and when Townshend shewed his answer to that letter, and asked whether he had not made too many compliments, observed, *that was impossible, for Walpole never had his equal in business*.

Notwithstanding, however, these evident proofs of Townshend's and Walpole's ascendancy, reports were industriously circulated, that Carteret's power was superior; and these reports coming by rebound from Hanover, were exaggerated in England and France, and had a considerable effect in suppressing the ardour of their adherents, and in giving spirit to the friends of their rival. It became necessary therefore to undeceive the public, and as Townshend observed, in a letter to Walpole, to obtain some *overt act* in their favour; it was accordingly determined to attack Carteret in his strong hold of Paris, where he supposed himself invincible.

As the union with France was at this juncture esteemed highly necessary to preserve the peace of Europe, and the internal tranquillity of England, those ministers who had the highest credit with the court of Versailles, were held in the highest estimation by George the First. Hence it became a matter of great concern for Townshend and Walpole to have their own confidential ambassador at Paris, which was now the center of the secret negotiations for all foreign affairs, and by these means to prevent their opponent from preserving his weight in the cabinet, which he principally derived from the supposed credit of his creature, Sir Luke Schaub. It was their interest therefore to obtain his removal, and to substitute some person in whom they could place implicit confidence, and whose appointment should prove to the court of France, and convince both friends and adversaries in England, of their ascendancy in the cabinet.

Mission of
Horace Wal-
pole to Paris.

Horace Walpole was selected as the fittest person to bring forward on this occasion. He had from his earliest years been trained to business, under Stanhope, in Spain; under Carleton, when chancellor of the exchequer and secretary of state; under Townshend, at the congress of Gertruydenberg, and during the negotiation for the barrier treaty in 1710. At the accession of George the First, he was appointed secretary to lord Townshend, and

afterwards secretary to the treasury; and, as envoy to the states general, had conducted with great skill and ability the complicated negotiations which took place at the Hague in 1715 and 1716. On the removal of Townshend and Walpole, he had continued invariably attached to them. At the coalition with Sunderland, in 1720, he had been nominated secretary to the duke of Grafton, then lord lieutenant of Ireland, and in 1721 secretary to the treasury. He was deputed, in 1722, as envoy to the Hague, which post he now filled with great credit and dignity, and was particularly noticed by George the First as a man of business and address.

Chapter 24.
1723 to 1724.

Although Carteret could not avoid foreseeing the decline of his interest from the death of cardinal du Bois, and considering the mission of Horace Walpole, as a proof of his rival's superiority; yet he affected to hold the credit of Schaub and his own as not in the smallest degree diminished.

As Townshend could not propose the mission of Horace Walpole to Paris, without an open quarrel with Carteret, to whose province, as the secretary for the southern department, that appointment belonged, he took advantage of the death of cardinal du Bois, which happened at this time, to carry his scheme gradually into execution. He represented to the king, that this event rendered it necessary to send a confidential person to Paris, for the purpose of gaining authentic information concerning the situation of affairs, and to ascertain whether Schaub was not at variance with count Nocé, who was supposed to govern the duke of Orleans. He named Horace Walpole as proper to be intrusted with so delicate an affair, and suggested, that he might affect to take Paris in his way to Hanover, from a motive of mere curiosity*.

Having succeeded in this point, Townshend suggested, that letters credential, under the pretence of sending a full power to accept the accession of the king of Portugal to the quadruple alliance, would facilitate the execution of the commission. The king approved this hint, and proposed it as his own thought to Carteret, who, though confounded at this mortification, could not venture to make any objection*.

Under these circumstances, Horace Walpole arrived at Paris on the 19th of October, and on the 21st, wrote so masterly a dispatch†, describing the situation of the court of France, the characters of the duke of Orleans, and of the principal ministers, as charmed the king, delighted his friends, and gave a sure omen of the victory which he was to obtain over Schaub, and consequently of that which his brother and Townshend would gain over Carteret. He particularly dwelt on Nocé's aversion to Schaub, on his refusal to listen to

Contest between Horace Walpole and Schaub.

* See Lord Townshend's Letters in September and October. Correspondence, 1723.

† Walpole Papers.

Period III.

1720 to 1727.

Nov. 21,
1723.

any overtures of reconciliation, and on the influence which he possessed over the duke of Orleans; circumstances artfully displayed to prove the necessity of appointing an envoy who might secure the good will of Nocé. Before the arrival of this dispatch at Hanover, Schaub had written, that the duke of Orleans was inclined to gratify the king, in conferring a dukedom on the family of la Vrilliere, and forwarded copies of letters which he had concerted with Morville, and which the king was to send to Louis the Fifteenth, and the duke of Orleans, pressing them in the strongest manner to comply with that request. Carteret, in a transport of joy, informed Schaub, that the king had approved the letters, and had transcribed that to Louis the Fifteenth with his own hand. He warned him however, not to deliver them, unless he was sure of success, and entreated him to forward the answer from the king of France as soon as possible. At the same time Townshend himself informed Walpole, that the affair of the dukedom was concluded, and that the marriage would soon take place: He added, that the duchess of Kendall already began to be jealous of the countess of Platen, and hinted, that through her influence, it might be practicable to establish Horace Walpole as ambassador at the court of France. The accounts, however, transmitted by Horace Walpole, were of a very different complexion. He maintained unequivocally, that Schaub was totally mistaken, and had promised more than he could effect. His dispatches and private letters were filled with representations of Schaub's petulant and indiscreet behaviour, in pressing the grant; the violent opposition made by the principal nobles, of their bitter and sarcastic reproaches against the interference of a British minister, or rather as they termed him, *no minister*, to obtain a dukedom for a family which was not entitled to such a distinction. He stated that Morville, tauntingly alluding to Schaub as a foreigner, said that he was happy to transact business with one who was a *true Englishman*. He detailed a secret and confidential conversation which he had with the duke of Orleans, who after observing that he had requested to see him, for the purpose of conversing frankly on an affair of great importance; plainly indicated that he could give no credit to the representations of Schaub, whose zeal in this whole business, had originated from his attachment to Madame de la Vrilliere, with whom he was engaged in a love intrigue. The duke then mentioned the impropriety of granting a dukedom to that family; observed that the king was not fully apprised of the difficulties attending it; and requested Horace Walpole to write to lord Townshend for authentic information concerning his majesty's real sentiments.

Death of the
duke of Or-
leans.

The day after this audience, the duke of Orleans died, and the duke of Bourbon

Bourbon was appointed prime minister. Schaub paid court to, and was well received by Madam de Prie, mistress of the duke of Bourbon, who favoured the grant from interested motives; and he wrote to Carteret the most exaggerated accounts of his influence over the new prime minister, and of his certain success in the affair of the dukedom. Carteret again believed these favourable accounts, and was again deceived.

Chapter 24.

1723 to 1724.

Horace Walpole acted with great dignity and judgment. He paid no servile attention to Madame de Prie, from a conviction that it was not necessary; behaved with deference to the duke of Bourbon, but privately courted the bishop of Frejus, afterwards cardinal Fleury, whose interest with the young king of France, he saw and appreciated, and whose confidence he gained by his prudent conduct. Although the new prime minister, from a desire of gratifying Madame de Prie, who wished to establish a precedent in favour of her husband's claims to a dukedom, was more inclined to forward the grant than his predecessor, yet the loud clamours of the nobility, and the decided aversion of Louis the Fifteenth to the measure, convinced him of its impracticability. Schaub was either ignorant of this circumstance, or affected to be so. Anxious to carry a point on the success of which Carteret's ascendancy in the cabinet, and his own continuance at Paris seemed ultimately to depend, and eager to gratify Madame de la Vrilliere, he pressed the duke of Bourbon, with his usual indiscretion, remonstrated against the delay as insulting to the king of England, and endeavoured to involve it in such a manner with public transactions as to make it a state affair.

The duke of Bourbon, embarrassed with these solicitations, now applied to Horace Walpole in the same manner as his predecessor had done. He observed that the difficulties were insuperable, gave a true state of the affair as it related to his own situation, and the French king's sentiments upon it; declared that the king, as well as the late duke of Orleans had been deceived and imposed upon, and concluded with some expressions of resentment and contempt at Schaub's conduct and importunity.

Horace Walpole received private instructions from Lord Townshend and his brother to proceed with great caution, and to act in such a manner as not to disgust the French cabinet, by pressing so disagreeable a request, and yet not to offend the king by appearing as if he was opposing his wishes. He followed these instructions with consummate address; and the accounts of his proceedings, which were shewn to the king, increased the good opinion

Prudent conduct of Horace Walpole.

* Horace Walpole to Lord Townshend, March 7, 1724. Walpole Papers.

Period III.

1720 to 1727.

already entertained of his talents for negotiation, proved the influence he was rapidly acquiring in the cabinet of Versailles, and tended to diminish the credit of Carteret and Schaub. The king, on his return to England, convinced that he had been deceived by Schaub, and that the obstacles to the grant were insuperable, reluctantly withdrew his solicitation. Carteret had the unwelcome task of commanding Schaub not to press the affair any farther, and of inclosing a letter * from the king to the duke of Bourbon, declaring that it never was his intention to make the dukedom a state affair, and declining to insist on a request which was disagreeable to the king of France and the prime minister. Carteret, however, was still so convinced of his superior favour, that he either disbelieved, or affected to disbelieve the reports of his declining influence. He filled his letters to Schaub with repeated declarations, that the king approved their conduct; exhorted him to be perfectly tranquil, and to bear all mortifications, until the affair of the dukedom should be finished; expressed his full conviction that they should maintain their ground, and that his own authority was stronger than ever; yet at the very time his own fall and the removal of Schaub were evident, from the appointment of Horace Walpole to be envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the court of Versailles. The additional honour thus conferred increased the jealousy of Schaub, who found all the assurances of his patron belied, and himself in danger of being recalled from Paris. But even this mortification did not induce Carteret to acknowledge the superiority of his rivals; he still gave Schaub the strongest assurances of support from the king; advised him to attach himself to the duke of Bourbon and Madame de Prie; he declared, that the king was secretly inclined in his favour, but that he did not love disputes, and was unwilling to require such explanations as would force him to take a decided part. He observed, that the answer to the duke of Bourbon could by no means be interpreted, as if the king abandoned his request of the dukedom, although he did not desire that it might be considered as a public affair.

Character of
Cadogan.

Carteret perhaps had sufficient reason to be secure of his victory, as well because he was personally a favourite with the king, as because he was joined by a formidable combination of men who possessed great weight and consequence. Amongst the members of the cabinet who acted with him, was William earl of Cadogan, who had concentrated in himself the posts of commander in chief, and master of the ordnance, and who was supported by the friends and adherents of his deceased patron, John duke of Marlbo-

* Walpole Papers, January 26, 1724.

rough,

rough, particularly by the duchess, whose enormous wealth enabled her occasionally to forward or obstruct the public loans, and who was highly offended with Walpole, for presuming to raise money at a less interest than she had required. Cadogan was frank, open, vehement, impatient of contradiction, and inclined, in case of difficulties, rather to cut the gordian knot with his sword, than to attempt by patience to unravel its intricacy. He was in high favour with the king for his knowledge of foreign languages, his acquaintance with foreign manners, and for an ease and address which was partly derived from an early intercourse with the world, and partly from an intermixture of military and civil occupations. At this crisis, Cadogan had rendered himself so obnoxious to Walpole, that it was determined to open the political campaign with his dismissal, which was to be a prelude to other changes. The post of commander in chief had been promised to lord Cobham, and the mastership of the ordnance to the duke of Argyle; but the king gave a decided negative to this proposal, by declaring that he would not part with Cadogan. As this attack was made at the opening of the session, when the predominant influence of Walpole in the house of commons, seemed to countenance an opinion, that his demands must be complied with; this repulse was considered by the friends of Carteret and Cadogan, as the sure omen of his downfall.

In the midst of these divisions in the cabinet, the affairs in Ireland, relating to Wood's patent, gave Carteret an opportunity of impressing the king with unfavourable sentiments of Walpole, to whose misconduct he principally imputed these disturbances. He fomented the discontents in Ireland, and caballed with the Brodricks, who were incensed against the duke of Grafton, lord lieutenant, for ascribing the opposition solely to the secret manœuvres of lord chancellor Middleton, and for insisting, that either he should be deprived of the seals, or should not be appointed one of the lords justices*. Their discontent was no less vehement against Walpole, who supported the duke of Grafton; and Carteret increased their consequence, by enumerating to the king the services which the family had performed in favour of his succession, by exaggerating their influence in Ireland, and by dwelling on the ill consequences which would result from depriving lord Middleton of the seals. These commotions, although finally quelled by the prudence and ability of Walpole, yet gave great embarrassment to his administration, and delayed the removal of Carteret.

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1723 to 1724.

Efforts of
Carteret.

* See Chapter 26th on the Disturbances in Ireland.

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Efforts of
Carteret.

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Walpole

Period III.

1730 to 1737.

Baffled by
Walpole.

Walpole baffled his adversaries with the same arts which they endeavoured to employ against him. Bolingbroke had betrayed to him the intrigues of Carteret with the Tories, and had made offers from some of their leaders to join administration; although he had rejected these overtures, and declined a general coalition with them, yet he detached several from the party, and amused others. He gained a great accession of strength by securing lord Harcourt, whom he introduced into the privy council, gratified with an increase of his pension, and for whom he obtained the appointment of one of the lords justices during the king's absence. By these means the leaders of the disaffected party were allured with hopes of similar honours and emoluments, if they would follow the same example; and highly dissatisfied with Carteret, made little opposition to the measures of government; flattering themselves that his removal would be soon followed by their introduction into power. To these expectations may be partly attributed the extreme tranquillity which distinguished the next session of parliament.

1724.
Parliamentary
proceedings.

While this struggle for power was carrying on in the interior of the cabinet, public affairs were conducted with unexampled prosperity and quiet. The parliament met on the 9th of January; the speech from the throne concluded with dignified expressions of the connection between the liberty and prosperity of the nation. "In the present happy situation of our affairs, I have nothing more to recommend to you, than that you would make use of the opportunity, which your own good conduct has put into your hands, in considering of such farther laws as may be wanting for the ease and encouragement of trade and navigation, for the employment of the poor, and for exciting and encouraging a spirit of industry in the nation. I am fully satisfied, that the trade and wealth of my people, are the happy effects of the liberties they enjoy, and that the grandeur of the crown consists in their prosperity."

The address passed not only without a single dissenting voice, but even without a debate; and during the whole session the only motion that occasioned a division, was one for keeping up the same number of troops for 1724, as was maintained the year before, which was carried by a majority of 240 against 100. On the 24th of April, this session, so tranquil in effect, and so barren of incidents, was closed by a speech which commended in high terms of approbation, the unanimity, cheerfulness, and dispatch with which the business had been conducted, and expressed the highest satisfaction, that the same force was maintained by sea and land, which had enabled the nation

to hold among the powers of Europe, the rank and figure due to her honour and dignity, without laying any new or additional burthen on the people *.

The unexampled unanimity and dispatch of business which distinguished this session, was almost solely owing to the good management of Walpole, and to his influence in the house of commons, which Saint John Brodrick, in a letter to lord Midleton, calls *prodigious* †. Hence his preponderance increased in the cabinet; and the king was induced to take a decided resolution in his favour, between the two discordant parties. As a prelude to the removal of Carteret, Horace Walpole was named ambassador to Paris. Yet such was the credit of Carteret, that this nomination was not finally effected without great difficulty. His address still supplied proofs of his influence, when it had almost totally declined; and Horace Walpole, in his private letters to his brother and Townshend, made no less heavy complaints of his situation at Paris, than Schaub did of his disgusts to Carteret ‡. The dispatches, though written to him and Schaub jointly, were by private intimations to the messenger, carried first to Schaub, and communicated by him to the French ministers, before Horace Walpole was informed of their contents; the dispatches for Spain, and the plenipotentiaries at the congress of Cambray, were enclosed to him, perused by him, and forwarded by him. Of this measure, Horace Walpole bitterly complained to his brother, declared his resolution not to act any longer jointly with Schaub, insisted that one of them must be recalled; and justly observed, that the removal or continuance of Schaub, must prove to the world, either the full establishment or decline of their credit with the king. Walpole and Townshend now found it necessary to exert all their influence, and to employ the utmost address §. They commissioned Horace Walpole to write an ostensible letter to lord Townshend, in which he should draw the character of Sir Luke Schaub, state the impropriety of his conduct, and the disadvantage which was derived to the king's affairs, by maintaining two ministers at Paris with divided authority, and insist on his own resignation, rather than continue in a situation in which he was perpetually thwarted and opposed.

This letter was shewn to the king, and had its due effect. He directed that Schaub should be immediately recalled, and Townshend himself con-

Chapter 24.

1723 to 1724.

Influence of
Walpole.

Horace Wal-
pole named
ambassador
to Paris.

Schaub re-
called.

* Journals. Chandler.

† Correspondence.

‡ Correspondence, January 5th, 1723.

§ This account of the intrigues of Carteret and Schaub at Paris, and the counter intrigues of Horace Walpole and the brother ministers, is drawn from Sir Luke

Schaub's Papers, in the possession of the earl of Hardwicke, and from the dispatches and letters to and from Horace Walpole, in the Orford and Townshend Papers. The most interesting of which will appear in the Walpole Correspondence.

vayed:

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Fall of Carteret.

Changes in the ministry.

Ascendency of Townshend and Walpole.

veyed the orders to Carteret. But on the evening of the day in which the communication was made, Carteret prevailed on the king to suspend the orders for a precipitate recal of Schaub, and was permitted to send him word that the king deemed his presence in England necessary for his service, and that he might return to Paris for the solemnization of the marriage between the Count de St. Florentin, and the young countess of Platen.

In obtaining this point, Carteret had another object in view, besides softening the disgrace of Schaub, and mortifying his rival; it was to send him back to Paris, with a commission, which would have rendered his presence more necessary, and finally occasioned the removal of Horace Walpole. This scheme was no less than to propose a treaty of marriage between the young king of France and the princess Anne, the eldest daughter of the prince of Wales. It was concerted between Carteret and the countess of Darlington at London, Sir Luke Schaub, Madame de la Vrilliere and Madame de Prie at Paris, and the countess of Platen at Hanover. Sir Luke Schaub had the indiscretion to make the proposal to the king, in his audience, but it was received with such marks of dissatisfaction, as gave Townshend and Walpole an opportunity to remonstrate against his presumption, and represent to the king the great disadvantage which would result to his affairs in France, if so indiscreet a person should be sent back as his minister. Schaub was therefore only permitted to return for the purpose of assisting at the Count de St. Florentin's marriage. The king gave a portion of £. 10,000 to the bride, but no dukedom was conferred on the family of la Vrilliere. Schaub was then recalled from Paris, and Horace Walpole received his credentials of ambassador from the duke of Newcastle, appointed secretary of state in the place of Carteret, who was constituted lord lieutenant of Ireland. The duke of Grafton was made lord chamberlain; Henry Pelham, brother of the duke of Newcastle, and the confidential friend of Walpole, was nominated secretary at war; and many of Walpole's friends were placed in the subordinate posts of government.

Thus terminated the contest between Carteret and the brother ministers; and though the victory was not as complete as they expected, because they could not obtain the removal of Cadogan, Roxburgh, and Middleton, yet it gave weight to their administration, and considerably diminished the strength of the opposing party in the cabinet. Carteret supported his defeat with great dignity and firmness of mind. He declared, that having no obligations

obligations to lord Townshend for his advancement to the post of secretary of state, he was resolved never to have submitted to him in that capacity. He did not affect to conceal his dissatisfaction at the ill usage he had received, and particularly complained that Horace Walpole had been sent to interlope in his province. While he avowed that he was defeated, he declared himself happier and easier in the situation of lord lieutenant, than that of secretary of state, exposed to continual mortifications; and professed his resolution to continue on good terms with the ministers, and to promote the measures of government*. Yet his temper was so sanguine and his spirit so little depressed, that he persevered in asserting, that his favour with the king was greater than ever, that his enemies had gained no real strength by the late alterations†, and, in expectation of a favourable change, delayed, under various pretences, his departure for Ireland, until the month of October, when the necessary attendance on the duties of his vice royalty annihilated his hopes. Townshend and Walpole were now in such high favour, that they prevailed over the king's inclinations, and overcame his jealousy of the prince of Wales, which, notwithstanding the apparent reconciliation, continued still unabated, and shewed itself in repeated refusals to confer any particular mark of favour on those who were personally attached to his son. With a view to gratify the prince, and to secure the earl of Scarborough, who was his master of the horse, and, next to Sir Spencer Compton, his greatest favourite, the brother ministers had promised him the garter; and as it was the custom of the king always to retain one vacant ribband, they waited until there were two undisposed of, when Townshend requested one of them for Scarborough. The king said, he could not comply with his request, because it was already conferred; and when Townshend asked, with some degree of surprise, who was the person? the king answered, "I intend it for your lordship." Townshend, after expressing a deep sense of his gratitude, begged leave to decline it. The king still insisted, and Townshend still declined. "Lord Scarborough," he replied, "is now at the door of the closet, expecting every moment to be called in to thank your majesty for the honour; he will naturally suppose that I have deceived him, and that after having left him with a promise to intercede in his favour, I have asked it for myself; which will ruin my character as a man of honour and veracity." "Well then," returned the king, "for once I will break through my usual rule, and will confer both the vacant garters; one shall be

* Stephen Poyntz to Horace Walpole, April 5th 1724. Walpole Papers.

† Saint John Brodrick to lord Middleton.—Correspondence.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

The king delays his journey to Hanover.

Meeting of parliament.

your's, and the other shall be given to lord Scarborough, whom you may now introduce *. Scarborough had accordingly the first, and both were installed at the same time †.

The king gave the strongest proof of the full confidence which he placed in Townshend and Walpole, by submitting to defer his journey to Hanover, even after he had fixed the time of his departure. This change of resolution was effected by the representations of lord Townshend, who stated in firm, though respectful terms, the inconveniences which would result from his absence at this period ‡.

The continuance of the king in England had operated in suppressing public clamours, and in promoting public tranquillity. The parliament, which met on the 12th of November, was opened by a speech from the throne, which dwelt with particular energy and satisfaction on the prosperous state of affairs: "Peace with all powers abroad, at home perfect tranquillity, plenty, and an uninterrupted enjoyment of all civil and religious rights, are most distinguishing marks of the favour and protection of divine Providence, and these, with all their happy consequences, will, I doubt not, by the blessing of God upon our joint endeavours, be long continued to my people." "The same provision by sea and land, for the defence and safety of the nation, will continue to make us respected abroad, and consequently secure at home. The same attention to the ease and encouragement of trade and navigation, will establish credit upon the strongest basis, and raise such a spirit of industry, as will not only enable us gradually to discharge the national debt, but will likewise greatly increase the wealth, power and influence of this kingdom.——You must all be sensible how much our present happiness is owing to your union and steady conduct; it is therefore wholly unnecessary to recommend to you unanimity and dispatch in all your deliberations. The zeal and abilities you have on all occasions shewn, in supporting the interest of your country, even under the greatest difficulties, leave no room to doubt of my having your entire and effectual concurrence in every thing that can tend to the service of the public, and to the good of my people §."

This session of parliament, no less remarkable for the unanimity with which business was conducted, than for a barrenness of important transactions, was only distinguished by the commencement of Pulteney's opposition,

* This anecdote was communicated by lord Sydney. It is mentioned in a different way by Count Broglie, in a letter to Louis the Fifteenth; but he relates it only as a rumour. Correspondence, 1724.

† Political State.

‡ See Correspondence.

§ Chandler.

the recal of Bolingbroke, events which are noticed in subsequent chapters of this work, and by the impeachment of lord Macclesfield, in which Walpole took very little share. It was closed on the 31st of May.

Chapter 24.
1723 to 1724.

A few days before the prorogation of parliament, the order of the Bath was revived, and the minister was created a knight, from which period he assumed the title of Sir Robert Walpole, and in 1726, he was installed knight of the garter; the value of which distinction is greatly enhanced by the consideration, that excepting admiral Montagu, afterwards earl of Sandwich, he was the only commoner who had ever been dignified by that order.

Walpole created knight of the bath and garter.

On this event he had the honour of being congratulated by the author of the Night Thoughts, in a poem, called the Instalment. The poet commences in an exalted strain of panegyric, by invoking the shades of the deceased knights to descend from heaven to assist at the inauguration of their new compeer :

Ye mighty dead, ye garter'd sons of praise !
Our morning stars ! Our boast in former days !
Which hov'ring o'er, your purple wings display,
Lur'd by the pomp of this distinguish'd day,
Stoop and attend : by one the knee be bound ;
One, throw the mantle's crimson folds around ;
By that, the sword on his proud thigh be plac'd,
This, clasp the diamond girdle round his waist ;
His breast, with rays, let just Godolphin spread ;
Wife Burleigh plant the plumage on his head ;
And Edward own, since first he fix'd the race,
None prest fair glory with a swifter pace.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH:

1725—1726.

Anecdotes of Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke.—Disagreement between him and Oxford.—His Schemes in favour of the Pretender.—Disgraced on the Accession of George the First.—Flies.—Joins the Pretender.—Appointed his Secretary of State.—Removed.—Causes of his Dismissal.—Makes Overtures to the British Cabinet.—Receives a Promise of being restored.—Writes his Letter to Sir William Wyndham, under that Supposition.—Censures Ministers.—Makes Overtures to them.—Cabals against them.—Renews his Offers of Attachment to them.—Conduct of Walpole in his Favour.—Bolingbroke receives his Pardon in Blood.—His Overtures to the Walpoles.—Act of Parliament in his Favour.—Motives for Walpole's Conduct.—Bolingbroke joins Opposition.—Remarks on his Conduct and Writings.

WHEN Atterbury arrived at Calais, he found Bolingbroke, who had just obtained his pardon, waiting for a conveyance to England, on which he expressed his surprise, and exclaimed, "Then I am exchanged." And well might the bishop be astonished, that a minister who had secretly caballed to place the Pretender on the throne, and had, since his flight, openly engaged in his service, should experience the lenity of government, and be permitted to return to his native country, which he had endeavoured to distress by secret intrigues and open rebellion.

The pardon of Bolingbroke, granted by the king, was soon followed by the repeal of the bill of attainder passed against him in 1716; and Walpole, who had moved for that bill, moved also for its repeal; an act of imprudence which he committed in opposition to the advice of his most approved friends, the opinion of several of the king's ministers, and in contradiction to his own judgment. I shall in this chapter attempt to develop the causes which led to this extraordinary event, and explain the reasons which induced Walpole to take a step, of which he too late repented. This inquiry will be introduced by a few biographical anecdotes, for the purpose of connecting the narrative.

Biographical
memoirs of
Bolingbroke.

Henry St. John, son of Sir Henry St. John, baronet, of Lydiard Tregoze, in Wiltshire, by Mary, second daughter and heiress of Robert Rich, earl of Warwick,

wick, was born in 1678*. He received his education at Eton school, and completed it at Christ Church, Oxford. He distinguished himself at a very early period by his talents and excesses; and made so conspicuous a figure in the house of commons, that in 1704, he was appointed secretary at war, by the influence of Harley, to whom he attached himself, and with whom he acted under the banner of the Tories. On the removal of Harley, in 1707, St. John resigned his employments, and followed the fortune of his benefactor. On the dismissal of the Whig administration, Harley proposed to reinstate him in his employment, and expressed a desire to admit some of the most moderate Whigs into the administration. But St. John opposed the coalition, and insisted on being appointed secretary of state for foreign affairs, with which demand Harley was obliged to comply.

Bolingbroke was suspected, during his embassy at Paris, of having betrayed the secrets of the cabinet to the French court. These suspicions of his treachery were probably derived from his inattention and love of pleasure; for Madame Tencin, so remarkable for beauty, abilities, gallantry, and skill in political intrigue, drew him into a connection with her, at the instigation of Torcy, and contrived to steal from him several papers and dispatches†.

Two such opposite characters as Oxford and Bolingbroke, could not long cordially agree. Bolingbroke possessed great animation of countenance, elegance of manners, and dignity of deportment. He was fascinating in conversation, of commanding eloquence, abounding in wit and fancy, master of polite learning, which he knew how to draw forth on all occasions. In his private character he was without morals and without principles, not only not concealing, but rather proud of his profligacy. He was fond of pleasure, yet never suffered his amusements to interfere with affairs of importance; affecting to resemble the characters of Alcibiades and Petronius, by mixing pleasure and business, in which, when necessity required his attendance, he was so indefatigable, that he would drudge like a common clerk. Quick in apprehension, easy of access, no less artful in negotiation than decisive and vigorous in action, clear and perspicuous in his style, but too fond of declamation and metaphor; adopting and enforcing all the violent measures of the Tories; scorning to temporise, caballing with the

Chapter 25.
1725 to 1726.

Disagreement
with Oxford.

* The age of lord Bolingbroke is erroneously stated by his biographer, and by Collins, both of whom say he died in 1751, in his 79th year, which places his birth in 1673. On the faith of these authorities, I mentioned, in an early part of this work, p. 14, that he was three years older than Sir Robert Walpole,

but the fact is, he was two years younger, as appears from one of his letters to Sir William Wyndham, dated *New year's day* 1738, in which he says "nine months hence I shall be three-score." (Egremont Papers.)

† Horace Walpole's Letter to Lord Townshend, Nov. 1. 1723. Walpole Papers.

friends

Period III. friends of the Pretender, either with a view to place him on the throne, or to
1720 to 1727. obtain the removal of Oxford by their assistance.

Character of
Oxford.

Oxford was unimpeached in his private character, never offending against morality, either in conversation or action, a tender husband and a good father; highly disinterested and generous. He prided himself on his high descent, was stiff and formal in his deportment, and so forbidding in his manner, as not to attract or conciliate those with whom he acted. He was learned and pedantic; embarrassed and inelegant, both in speaking and writing. He was equally an enemy to pleasure and business; extremely dilatory and fond of procrastination; timid in public affairs, yet intrepid when his own person only was concerned; jealous of power, indefatigable in promoting the petty intrigues of the court, but negligent in things of importance; a Whig in his heart, and a Tory from ambition; too ready, for temporary convenience, to adopt measures he disapproved, yet unwilling wholly to sacrifice his real sentiments to interest or party; affecting the most profound secrecy in all political transactions, and mysterious in the most trifling occurrences. He was liberal in making promises, yet breaking them without scruple, a defect which arose more from facility of temper, than from design. He corresponded at the same time with the dethroned family and the house of Hanover, and was therefore neither trusted or respected by either party. The only point in which these two ministers agreed, was the love of literature and the patronage of learned men; which rendered their administration eminently illustrious.

Bolingbroke
disgusted.

The disagreement naturally occasioned by such discordance of tempers and principles, was heightened by a perpetual struggle for power, and the views of disappointed ambition. Bolingbroke was disgusted that Harley was advanced to an earldom, while he was only created a viscount; a cause of complaint which he acknowledged, by saying that he was dragged into the house of lords, in such a manner as to make his promotion a punishment and not a reward. He was still farther discontented, when he was refused the order of the garter, although six vacant ribbands were conferred, among whom his rival, Oxford, was not forgotten. But although he was disaffected, yet he did not venture to give a public opposition to the first minister. Oxford maintained the superiority of power, by the ascendancy of long habit, by the influence of the favourite, lady Masham, and by the strong prejudice which queen Anne entertained against Bolingbroke, for his notorious profligacy.

Obtains the
removal of
Oxford.

But when Oxford neglected the Jacobites, by whose assistance he had made a peace, and offended lady Masham, by depriving her of a share
in

in the profits of the assiento contract, Bolingbroke took advantage of these indiscretions; he intrigued with Berwick and the agents of the Pretender, caballed with lady Masham, who favoured the restoration of the Pretender, affected to court the Whigs, obtained the dismissal of Oxford, and would have succeeded him in the place of lord high treasurer, had not the death of queen Anne disappointed his hopes.

Chapter 25.
1725 to 1726.

Being, by the command of George the First, deprived of the seals with marks of disgrace, he sent a vindication of his conduct to the king, and in a visit which he paid to Bothmar, attributed his dismissal to the insinuations of Oxford, and accused his rival of having misrepresented his conduct*. When the arrangement of the new administration precluded him from all hopes, and the Tories were persecuted, he acted with spirit and dignity, and warmly defended in the house of lords, the peace of Utrecht, when it was attacked by the Whigs. He would not however venture to stand the prosecution which awaited him, but after having received, as he himself asserts, certain and repeated information, "that a resolution was taken to bring him to the scaffold," he fled from England†.

Dismissed.

Quits Eng-
land.

Notwithstanding the laboured apologies and eloquent vindication of his conduct, in his letter to Sir William Wyndham; and his positive assurances that he never formed any engagements with the Pretender, until he had been attainted‡; it is now ascertained beyond the smallest doubt, that Bolingbroke had entered deeply into the schemes which Oxford, in connivance with the queen, had formed to break the Protestant succession, and to place the Pretender on the throne of Great Britain; that Oxford had caballed with the Jacobites, principally with a view to overturn the Whig ministry, and to facilitate the peace; and that the real cause of his removal was derived from a refusal to continue the designs in favour of the Pretender, which Bolingbroke offered to pursue. The whole plan and progress of this conspiracy is detailed in so clear and unequivocal a manner by Marshal Berwick, who was principally concerned in the correspondence, as to demonstrate the guilt of Bolingbroke, and sufficiently prove that he was justly attainted for treasonous practices by the sovereign whom he had attempted to exclude from the throne||.

Having quitted England, to avoid the punishment which awaited him, he threw himself into the Pretender's service, and was appointed his secretary of state. The Pretender, on his return from his ill-conducted expedition into

Joins the
Pretender.

* Macpherson's State Papers, vol. x. p. 650.

† Tindal, vol. 18. p. 356.

‡ Final Answer to the Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication.

|| Memoires de Berwic.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Scotland, suspecting the treachery or indiscretion of Bolingbroke, dismissed him from his service with ignominy; many reports were spread at Paris of the motives which induced the Pretender to remove a person of such distinguished talents, to which the earl of Stair ludicrously alludes in a private letter to Horace Walpole*. But though charges of treachery † were laid against Bolingbroke, by the Pretender's party at Paris, yet as Stair gave no credit to them; and as Marshal Berwick ‡ also entirely exculpated him from any imputation of treachery; we have no reason to suppose that he acted contrary to his professions, or was mean enough to betray a prince whom he was at that time interested to restore. His dismissal was sudden and unexpected. He had supped with the Pretender, who declared that he had many enemies, but assured him of his unalterable kindness. Bolingbroke retired at one in the morning; and at nine the duke of Ormond came to demand the seals. The real cause of his dismissal was derived from some abusive expressions, which, in a state of intoxication, he had uttered against the Pretender. Ormond, who was present, related them in confidence to lord Mar, who, desirous of ruining Bolingbroke, that he might succeed him in his office of secretary of state, asked the duke, in the presence of the Pretender, what the expressions were which Bolingbroke had made use of. Ormond declined repeating them, until the Pretender commanded him; he then obeyed, and the Pretender was so exasperated, that he instantly sent Ormond to announce his disgrace. This step was taken without the knowledge of the queen-mother. Hearing of his dismissal, she sent to Bolingbroke, requesting him not to retire; as matters might be still adjusted between her son and him. He returned for answer, that he was a free man; that he wished his arm might rot off, if he ever drew his sword, or employed his pen in their service §.

Cabals with
Stair.

Bolingbroke, in fact, rejoiced at his dismissal, for it gave him an immediate pretence to quit the party. "The chevalier, he says, cut this gordian knot asunder at one blow. He broke the links of that chain which former engagements had fastened on me, and gave me a right to esteem myself free from obligations of keeping measures with him. I took therefore, from that moment, the resolution of making my peace at home, and of employing

* Correspondence, Article Bolingbroke, Period III.

† These charges were made in a letter from James Murray, afterwards created earl of Dunbar, by the Pretender, and were answered partly by himself and partly by his secretary,

Brinsden ||, and his justification refuted in a reply supposed to be written by Mar.

‡ Memoires de Berwic.

§ Earl of Waldegrave's Diary, who received the account from general Buckley, who was at the time in the Pretender's household.

all the unfortunate experience I had acquired already, to undeceive my friends, and to promote the union and quiet of my country *." Chapter 25.
1725 to 1726.

He opened accordingly a negotiation with the earl of Stair, who, he says, had been commissioned from England to treat with him, but while he refused to reveal secrets which had been intrusted to him, or betray his friends, he offered his services for the support of the established government. He said that he never did any thing by halves, that in returning to his duty he proposed to serve his king and country with zeal and affection; that with that view he thought himself bound by duty and gratitude, honour, and even self interest, to inform the king of every thing which his experience could suggest, that might be useful to strengthen the public tranquillity, and to crush the projects of the king's enemies. He offered his services to recal to their duty the Tories who had embraced the Pretender's party, by developing his true character, and by shewing how greatly they deceived themselves in trusting to him for security for their religion and liberties. "As to myself," adds lord Stair, "I am convinced that he spoke to me in the sincerity of his heart, I firmly believe that he is resolved to do all that lies in his power to suppress, and eradicate the Pretender's party; and I am fully satisfied, that there is no person who can do more hurt to the cause than he can. At the end of our conversation, he pressed my hand; and said, "My lord, if the ministers do me justice to believe that my professions are sincere; the more they manage my reputation, the greater will be the advantage to the king's affairs. If, on the contrary, they suspect my conduct, they will act right in enacting conditions, which I shall also act right in rejecting. The difficulties which I make in promising too much, will guaranty the performance of my engagements. In all cases, time and my conduct will prove the uprightness of my intentions; and it is far better to wait with patience, than to obtain my wishes earlier, by quitting the path of honour and probity †."

These offers seem to have been accepted; promises were made to him of restoration to his country; a barony was, on the second of July 1716, conferred on his father, Sir Henry St. John, with a reversion to his other sons, and it was in consequence of these favours, and the expectation of a future reward, and probably by the advice of lord Stair, that Bolingbroke wrote a confidential letter ‡ to Sir William Wyndham, which was purposely thrown into the

Obtains promise of pardon.

* Letter to Sir William Wyndham.

† Lord Stair's Letter to secretary Craggs, at the end of lord Bolingbroke's Letter to Sir William Wyndham.

‡ Correspondence. Period III.—Article, Bolingbroke.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

hands of the ministry, and of which an account is given by lord Townshend to secretary Stanhope, who was then at Hanover. This friendly communication, in which he exhorts his friend to quit the cause of the Pretender, was followed by his celebrated letter, that was afterwards published.

Although Bolingbroke, from the hopes of being restored to his country, thus traversed the views of the Pretender; yet the ministers, who had reaped great advantage from his recantation, did not fulfil their promises, and he continued in anxious suspense, constantly expecting the performance of engagements which was as constantly deferred.

Obtains his
pardon.

Sunderland and Stanhope, in particular, seem to have given him expectations, which they either were unable or never intended to realise; and a report of his restoration, in 1719, gave to Walpole, who was then in opposition, an opportunity of mentioning it with public disapprobation. In his pamphlet on the peerage bill, speaking of Oxford, he says, "His rival in guilt and power even now presumes to expect an act of the legislature to indemnify him, and qualify his villainy; and I doubt not but both * expect once more to give laws to the kingdom †." Yet it was under the administration, and by the efforts of this very minister, who had moved his impeachment in the house of commons, that Bolingbroke was restored to his country. In May 1723, his pardon passed the great seal, or as it was called, his restoration in blood, which enabled him to return to his country, but without giving back his forfeited estate, or his seat in the house of peers ‡.

Visits Eng-
land.

Bolingbroke, on receiving his pardon, came to England, wrote letters of thanks to the king, Townshend, and the duchess of Kendal at Hanover, waited on Walpole, to whom he behaved in the most servile manner, and betrayed the intrigues of Carteret with the Tories. He even proposed to Walpole, a coalition with Sir William Wyndham, earl Gower, and other leaders of that party, whom he described as dissatisfied with Carteret for having amused them with false hopes, disgusted with a fruitless opposition, and anxious to join administration. Walpole reprimanded his officiousness with becoming dignity, and did not hesitate insinuating, that he was working against his own interest, in attempting to form a coalition between the Whigs and Tories, when his restoration depended solely on a Whig parliament; at the same time he frankly declared that great difficulties opposed it; gave no hopes that he would rashly bring before the house of commons any motion

* Oxford and Bolingbroke.

† p. 14.

‡ Political State for 1723.

in his favour, and hinted, that any future reward could only be purchased by future services. Bolingbroke received these observations with the utmost deference, acknowledged his obligations to Townshend and Walpole, and made the strongest professions of future attachment. He kept up a correspondence with the duchess of Kendal, and trusted to her influence for removing all obstructions.

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1725 to 1726.

He availed himself of this journey to renew his intimacy with his former acquaintances, particularly Sir William Wyndham, and to procure new connections. His insinuating manners and lively conversation captivated many who had detested him while in power and prosperity. Amongst these lord Finch and the earl of Berkley received his overtures with complacency, and zealously espoused his cause *.

After passing a few weeks at Aix-la-Chapelle, with a view to obtain permission to pay a visit at Hanover; he returned to Paris, at the moment when Horace Walpole and Schaub were striving for pre-eminence in the cabinet of Versailles. Being fully convinced that Carteret would be defeated, and that the influence of Townshend and Walpole was predominant, he paid the most servile court to Horace Walpole, and gave him repeated information on subjects of great secrecy and importance.

Returns to
Paris.

On the death of the duke of Orleans, a prospect opened to him of rendering his situation at Paris extremely interesting, by becoming a confidential channel of communication between the duke of Bourbon and the British administration, and his own efforts were not wanting to carry his scheme into execution. He communicated to Walpole and Harcourt the situation of affairs at the court of France, drew the character and described the power of the duke of Bourbon, and the influence of Madame de Prie over him. He stated his own intimacy with the prime minister and the mistress, and offered his services to carry on a secret correspondence, and to promote the good understanding between the two kingdoms, which had been established under the administration of the late duke of Orleans, and which, unless the duke of Bourbon could be kept steady to the same principles, was in danger of being overturned †.

Makes over-
tures to the
Walpoles.

Bolingbroke managed the business with such dexterity, that he affected to decline, while he was most anxious to be employed in this mediation; and appeared to be acting in conformity to the suggestions of the British cabinet, while he was carrying into execution his own arrangements. Walpole was so

* Etough.

† Correspondence.—Article Bolingbroke.

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1720 to 1727.

far imposed on by his artful representations, that he wrote to his brother Horace, recommending him to employ Bolingbroke as agent with the duke of Bourbon; and had not the address and sagacity of the minister at Paris declined his interposition, and opened a direct communication with the duke of Bourbon, without the privity of Bolingbroke, the principal management of the king's affairs must have been thrown into his hands, and the ministers in England have been laid under such obligations, that his complete restoration would have been an act of justice and necessity. Foiled in this attempt, he endeavoured to insinuate himself into the negotiation relating to the grant of a dukedom to the Marquis de la Vrilliere. He related to Horace Walpole the embarrassments under which the duke of Bourbon laboured, exaggerated the indiscretion of Schaub, and hinted that by proper management, that intrigue might be so conducted as to lay a foundation of merit with the French minister, and destroy the credit of Carteret. In a conference which he had with the duke of Bourbon, the account of which he took care should be communicated to Horace Walpole *, he decried Carteret, praised Townshend, and exalted the abilities and influence of Walpole. This double dealing did not escape the notice of Schaub; and in reply to his account, transmitted in his private correspondence, Carteret was induced to observe, "What you say of Bolingbroke is scarcely credible. If it is true, he has not half the capacity I thought he had †."

In the midst of these intrigues, Bolingbroke opened his situation and explained his sentiments to Horace Walpole. He described his suspense and agitation, recapitulated the repeated promises given by Sunderland and Stanhope, mentioned his repeated disappointments, and observed, "that autumnal promises had ended in vernal excuses." He expressed his thanks for the act of favour lately extended to him, and added that he had no reason to complain of the present ministers, as they had performed as much as they had undertaken. He trusted that the inclinations of the king, as well as those of Townshend and Walpole, were not unfavourable; and hoped that his restoration might be obtained in parliament. He endeavoured to separate his case from all considerations of party. He artfully declared himself at full liberty, as having no tie nor obligation to any persons, but to those who would come forward in his favour; disclaimed all connections with the Tories, whom he

* Letter from Horace Walpole to Robert Walpole, Paris, December 15, 1723. Walpole Papers.

† Carteret to Schaub, March 12, 1724. Hardwicke Papers.

accused

accused of having treated him with ingratitude and barbarity; and declared his firm opinion, that the administration could not stand, nor the government be supported, excepting on a Whig foundation, and no engraftment could be made but upon a Whig stock. He protested that he would prove himself a faithful subject to the king, and be for ever grateful to those who had served him in so important an affair; and would act as they should prescribe to him, either by exerting himself in the House of lords, or by retiring into the country.

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The reply of Horace Walpole was open, manly, and explicit. He expressed great satisfaction at the declaration, that his brother and friends had never deceived Bolingbroke, and said that what remained to be done depended on parliament. He exposed the difficulties arising from the temper and disposition of parties, hinted at the general aversion of the Whigs to his restoration, described the embarrassment of the ministers, and the obstacles which might arise to defeat it, if precipitately introduced into the house of commons; and he hinted in general terms, that his brother's proneness to mercy, his regard for Bolingbroke, and his inclination to oblige lord Harcourt, would incline him to adopt any practicable means to do him service.

Bolingbroke observing, from this discourse, that insuperable difficulties obstructed his complete restoration, prudently appeared to give up that design, and requested that Horace Walpole would intercede with his brother, at least to obtain the reversal of his attainder, so far as to render him capable of enjoying the family estate, after the death of his father. He added, that he had not mentioned this request even to his friend lord Harcourt, but entirely submitted it to the good will and judgment of the minister at the head of the treasury *.

His views at this period were facilitated by his marriage with Madame de Villette, the niece of Madame de Maintenon, a woman of great merit and accomplishments, who was highly esteemed at the French court; and a private transaction, which related to part of her property, gave him an opportunity of sending her to England, and of soliciting his restoration. Madame de Villette employed Drummond, an English banker, to place £. 50,000 in the funds, who purchased, in the name of Sir Matthew Decker, long annuities, bearing interest at 4 per cent. Decker gave a note to Drummond, with an order to pay the sum on the demand of Madame de Villette. Eigh-

Marries Madame de la Villette.

* Horace Walpole's Letter to Robert Walpole.—Orford and Walpole Papers.

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1720 to 1727.

teen months afterwards, Decker paid £. 1,000 on her draft, and remitted her the annual interest of the remainder till Christmas 1723. About that period, he refused to transfer any more money on her order, alledging, that as she was married, he could not deliver it up without being indemnified; and the situation of lord Bolingbroke, whose estate and property had been declared forfeited, rendered his indemnification of no avail. Thus circumstanced, his lady repaired to England, bearing the name of Villette, and required the payment of her money in her own right. She brought strong recommendations from the duke of Bourbon and count de Morville, and under cover of this transaction, paid assiduous court to the ministers, by whom she was well received, and from whom she obtained a promise to reverse that part of the bill of attainder which related to the forfeiture of his estate. Bolingbroke expressed himself highly satisfied with this promise, although it fell short of the offers which had been made by the preceding administration, and renewed, in the strongest terms, his professions of devotion to Walpole, for this essential mark of favour.

Difficulties
attending the
partial rever-
sal of his at-
tainer.

The minister, however, had many difficulties to encounter, and many obstructions to remove, before he could venture to submit the question to the house of commons. Although Sir William Wyndham had conciliated, in favour of Bolingbroke, a great number of Tories, yet a considerable body of them, highly dissatisfied with his late application to the Whigs, still remained inflexible. But the principal opposition was expected from the staunch Whigs, those who had been the strenuous advocates for the succession in the Hanover family, and who were the firm supporters of government. To obtain their assent, or to baffle their attempts, required much skill and management, and was the work of time and labour.

The time at length arrived when this promise was fulfilled. On the 20th of April 1725, lord Finch offered to the house of commons, a petition from Henry St. John, late viscount Bolingbroke, setting forth, "That he was truly concerned for his offence in not having surrendered himself, whereby he was attainted of high treason, and forfeited all his real and personal estate, and praying, that leave may be given to bring in a bill for restoring him to his family inheritance, and enabling him to make purchases of any real or personal estate within the kingdom."

Walpole
supports the
bill.

Walpole brought the consent and approbation of the king; and after the reading of the petition, seconded the motion, made by lord Finch, for bringing in the bill, by observing, "That he was fully satisfied the petitioner had sufficiently atoned for his past offences, and therefore deserved the favour of

that

that house so far, as to enable him to enjoy his family inheritance, which could not be done without an act of parliament." Chapter 25.
1725 to 1726.

Methuen, comptroller of the household, in an animated speech, which made a deep impression on the house, expressed his hearty disapprobation of the motion, and observed, "that the public crimes for which this petitioner stood attainted, were so heinous, so flagrant, and of so deep a dye, as not to admit of any expiation or atonement; and whatever he might have done to deserve his majesty's private grace and pardon, yet he thought him altogether unworthy of any national favour." Then, after enumerating the instances of his villainous and scandalous conduct, while he had a share in the administration of affairs in the last reign; he concluded, "to sum up all his crimes in one, his traitorous design of defeating the Protestant succession, the foundation of both our present and future happiness; and of advancing a popish Pretender to the throne, which would have involved his native country in endless misery." The arguments which serjeant Miller advanced were no less strong. "He was against the motion for three reasons: 1. Because he thought it against the interest of the king. 2. Against the interest of his country. 3. Against the interest of the present ministry. That he loved the king better than he loved himself; and hated his enemies more than he did. That he loved his country as he loved himself; and as he thought its interest inseparable from the king's, so he would not have any public favour shewn to one, who had acted in so notorious a manner against both. And as for the present ministers, he was so well satisfied with their just, prudent, and successful management, that he would not see them exposed to the cabals and intrigues of their inveterate, though seemingly reconciled enemies*." This opposition was strenuously enforced by Arthur Onslow, afterwards speaker of the house of commons, lord William Paulet, Sir Thomas Pengelly, and several others, who almost uniformly supported the measures of government. The motion, however, was carried by 231 voices against 113; and lord Finch and Walpole were ordered to bring in a bill according to the prayer of the petitioner†.

On the second reading of the bill, lord William Paulet moved for the addition of a clause, "disabling the late viscount Bolingbroke from being a member of either house of parliament, or from enjoying any office or place of trust." This motion, warmly seconded by several members, was no less strenuously opposed by the minister, and negatived by 154 against 84. May 13.

* Chandler.

† Journals.

Period III.

1720 to 1727.

Passed.

July 24.
Bolingbroke
returns to
England.Complains of
Walpole.Joins opposi-
tion.Mutual ac-
cusations.

The bill being agreed to, was sent up to the house of lords, there it passed without a division; but not without a violent protest signed by five * lords, and finally received the royal assent.

Thus was concluded this difficult and disagreeable business, from which the minister acquired more unpopularity than from any other act in his administration, for which he incurred great censure both from friends and enemies; and by which, instead of conciliating the favour, he exasperated the very person for whom he exposed himself to so much obloquy.

Soon after the passing of this act, Bolingbroke returned to England, wholly dissatisfied with the reversal of the forfeiture, which he had so repeatedly and earnestly solicited as the termination of his hopes, and for which he proffered his most devoted attachment to those who should favour his cause. "Here I am," he observed in a letter to Swift, "two thirds restored, my person safe, (unless I meet hereafter with harder treatment than even that of Sir Walter Raleigh) and my estate, with all the other property I have acquired, or may acquire, secured to me. But the attainder is kept carefully and prudently in force, lest so corrupt a member should come again into the house of lords, and his bad leaven should sour that sweet untainted mass †."

About the same time, he wrote a letter to the king, claiming the promise that had been made of a full restitution, laying the blame of the failure on the minister, whom he accused of meanness and treachery ‡, under the mask of good will. He disclaimed all obligation to Walpole, always asserted, both in his public writings and private letters, that the king invited him, and drew him into England by frequent, solemn, and unsolicited promises of his complete restoration §.

He now declared himself a decided enemy to Walpole, effected a reconciliation with the Tories, whom he had so recently reviled, joined Pulteney and the discontented Whigs; and a year had scarcely elapsed since the passing of the bill, before he began to publish in the Craftsman, a political paper, which first appeared the 5th of December 1726, a series of essays replete with the most bitter invectives.

The adherents of the minister, in their turn, no less bitterly accused Bolingbroke of ingratitude; that after being restored to the liberty of breathing the air of his native country, and the enjoyment of his fortune (when he

* Coventry, Bristol, Clinton, Lechmere, Onslow. Journals.—Chandler.

† Swift's Works, vol. 19. p. 164.

‡ Lord Bolingbroke to lord Hardwicke,

Correspondence, Period III. Article, Bolingbroke.

§ Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham. Ibid.

was deservedly an exile from one, and had justly forfeited the other) by the indulgence, favour, and assistance of another minister, using that indulgence, and requiting that favour, by labouring the destruction of his benefactor.

Chapter 25.
1725 to 1726.

In all questions where party is concerned, and resentment excited, and where abuse is thrown out with unabating virulence on both sides, it is difficult to reconcile discordant assertions, and to extract truth from opposite accusations. It is no less difficult to render the conduct of Walpole consistent with that prudence by which he was commonly directed, or to justify the motives which induced him to promote an act that enabled Bolingbroke to settle in England, and to harass his administration. He had known Bolingbroke from his early youth; he appreciated his talents, was aware of his insinuating manners and restless temper, was not ignorant that while he was paying the most servile court to the Whigs, he had been caballing with the Tories; was convinced that no dependence could be placed on his word, and must have been conscious that nothing less than a full restoration would satisfy a man of his aspiring ambition.

But the apparent inconsistency and imprudence of Walpole's conduct, are sufficiently accounted for from the secret history of this whole transaction; from which it appears, that he did not act from his own impulse, but was gradually led to promote a measure, which he did not approve. We have the authority of Sir Robert Walpole himself, that the restoration of lord Bolingbroke was the work of the duchess of Kendal, and that it was in obedience to the express commands of the king, that he supported the act. Bolingbroke, continually disappointed in his hopes, had recourse to a surer and more powerful channel of favour. He gained the duchess of Kendal by a present of £.11,000*, and obtained a promise to use her influence over the king for the purpose of forwarding his complete restoration. Harcourt, with her co-operation, seems principally to have managed this delicate business; and as at this period Townshend was reconciled to the duchess of Kendal, it was probably owing to her interest that he was induced to move the king to grant a pardon to Bolingbroke, and even to give him still farther hopes.

Motives of
Walpole's
conduct.

In this juncture, Townshend removed to Hanover, and left to Walpole the management of the business. Walpole having founded his friends, and the advo-

* Etough's Minutes of a Conversation with Sir Robert Walpole. Correspondence.

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cates of government, found that strong objections were made to the restoration of so obnoxious a person, and being himself inclined to the same opinion, he, with his usual frankness and candour, represented the difficulties, not only to Townshend, but even to Bolingbroke himself, and declined entering into any farther engagements. Bolingbroke, who well understood the temper of parties, soon perceived that insuperable obstacles were opposed to his complete restoration. He thought fit, therefore, to temporize, and requested, as I have already observed, the reversal of part of the bill of attainder, without obtaining his seat in the house of lords. This request, strongly enforced by the dukes of Kendal, was particularly recommended by the king to Walpole, in a most authoritative manner. The minister could not venture to disobey the express commands of the king; could not withstand the importunities of the dukes, who had recently assisted in driving Carteret and Cadogan from the helm; was anxious to oblige lord Harcourt, with whom he then lived in habits of the strictest intimacy, and was overcome by the unceasing solicitations of Bolingbroke, and softened by his professions of inviolable devotion.

Walpole himself performed all he had promised; and had reason in his turn to expect the accomplishment of those professions of gratitude which Bolingbroke had recently made to him. He was not responsible for any agreement made by the preceding administration; he was not answerable for the private assurances of the dukes of Kendal; he was not even bound by the promises, if any such were positively made, of the sovereign himself. Bolingbroke had therefore no reason to accuse Walpole of meanness and treachery, of having broken his word, and of having deceived him under the mask of good-will; for the minister never in any instance promised a full restitution, but always in the most frank and candid manner, gave no farther hopes than obtaining the repeal of that part of the bill of attainder which related to the forfeiture of his estates.

But whatever were the motives which induced Walpole to consent to the return of Bolingbroke, it was undoubtedly the greatest act of imprudence which he ever committed. For till that event, he had only to contend with an heterogeneous opposition, unallied in principle, and divested of mutual confidence; easily vanquished, because not capable of uniting under any leader acceptable to all in a well-concerted attack. It remained for Bolingbroke to infuse spirit and harmony into this inert and ill-combined mass. He soon found means to effect this end, by a plausible philosophy, recommended by all the graces of eloquence, and enforced by all the arts of personal address. He directed and inspired their labours in parliament; and
his

his ready pen was employed at once to justify their conduct, and to vilify their adversaries.

His writings were recommended by a glare of metaphysical ornament, at that time very unusual, the effect of which was to dazzle the judgment of the reader, fix his attention upon the surface, and prevent him from penetrating into the substance of the argument.

It is a just remark of his biographer, that Bolingbroke too frequently falls into the same error of which he accuses Clarendon, that of giving characters of persons which are incompatible with their actions. He warped history to his own convenience, and was less solicitous to represent past events truly, than, under colour of relating them, to draw parallels with those against whom he directed his efforts, by selecting only such parts as suited his particular views*. In drawing the character of Walpole, Bolingbroke is guilty of the grossest misrepresentation, and the most exaggerated malice. It is recorded of Zeuxis, the celebrated painter, that for the purpose of giving perfection to the portrait of Venus, he selected the most beautiful parts of the most beautiful women, and from the union of those parts, formed the goddess, without a single defect. In his political delineations, Bolingbroke has pursued the opposite line of conduct. He selected from the ministers of all times and countries, their prominent vices, and from their assemblage, drew the portrait of Walpole without a single virtue.

From the versatility of Bolingbroke's political life, no fundamental principle of action could be expected; for where is that principle which at some period he had not violated? Where was the party to which he had not rendered himself obnoxious? Nothing then remained for him, but to form a political creed as versatile as his life, and which, Proteus-like, adapted itself to all times, situations, and circumstances.

His doctrines are principally reduced under three heads. A government by prerogative, rather than by influence; coalition of parties; the supposed perfection of the human species in particular instances.

The leading principle of his writings was, that a government by prerogative was better than a government by influence. In enforcing this topic, the author betrays his aversion to the revolution, while he affects to praise it, by an assertion no less remarkable for its audacity than its untruth; namely, that the rights of the subject were more endangered by the system of influence, which had taken place since, than by that of arbitrary power which was pursued before that æra. That the crown had acquired more sources of power by the establishment of the funds, and nomination of revenue of-

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1725 to 1726.

Remarks on
the political
writings of
Bolingbroke.

* Life of Bolingbroke, p. 334.

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ficers, and enjoyed the means of invading liberty more effectually by the constitution of the revenue, than it ever had been invaded by prerogative. He characterises prerogative as a mere *chimera*, and influence as *a new and undefinable monster, far more dangerous to our liberties*. He avers, that national corruption, which he makes the necessary consequence of investing the crown with the nomination of the officers employed in managing the revenue, is become universal, and that the loss of liberty is the natural and necessary consequence of national corruption. From these premises he draws the obvious conclusion, that it becomes highly necessary to save the ruin of the constitution, by reducing the power of the king, by means of an independent house of commons; and declares that the only method of effecting this, was to lessen the means of corruption, to revive frequent parliaments, and to insure their purity by introducing self-denying ordinances.

This tenet could only be supported by the other two doctrines, equally absurd and extravagant. The second of these doctrines was to enforce the *coalition of parties*, by which he understood that all the invidious distinctions of Whig and Tory *, Dissenter and Church-man, which had so long troubled and distracted the kingdom, should be sunk into those of court and country; the first of which he considers as *a faction and confederacy against the other*; and the second he characterises under the denomination of *constitutionalists*.

With a view to effect this purpose in a free country, in which party is an essential requisite, he drew out a system of policy so artfully contrived, that any man, whatever were his political opinions, might, without appearing to desert his own private notions of government, enlist himself under the banners of any opposition, or vote in favour of any question, however repugnant to his real sentiments, under the notion of opposing or driving out a corrupt minister, and the semblance of laying aside all prejudice and party attachment.

In attempting to *explode all former distinctions, to unite men of all denominations, and to change the narrow spirit of party into a diffusive spirit of public benevolence*, he well knew that he contradicted the history of past ages, and the experience of his own; and he therefore broached the third doctrine, the supposed perfection of the human species, in particular instances. Convinced of the absurdity of advancing, that an opposition composed of the most heterogeneous parts could continue uniformly true to their professed principles, and would not be divided or desert each other at the instigations of ambition or self-interest, he

* The impossibility of reconciling the Whigs and the Tories, and the different views of those parties, are fully shewn by his own confession, in a letter to Sir William Wyndham, July 23, 1739. Correspondence, Period VII.

turned

turned his hopes of success from the many to the few; to those few who engross the whole reason of the species, who are born to instruct, to guide, and to preserve, and who are designed to be tutors and guardians of human kind. Forgetting his own complaint, that human passions are so strong, and human reason so weak, he described men as they ought to be, and not as they are; men whom he represented as stars still stuck in good plenty up and down our hemisphere, making virtue the foundation of their friendship, and merit the title to their favour; delighting rather to be thought good than great; just in all their dealings; moderate in their pleasures; not solicitous for a place because they want it, but because the place wants them.

But still conscious that he overrated the number of those chosen few, he concentrated the virtues and wisdom of the whole species into one man, A PATRIOT KING, whom he considered as born to form the happiness and glory of England, under whose government the head, and all the members, should be united in one common cause, and animated by one common spirit.

In drawing this chimerical character, he laid down positions no less chimerical. He supposed that all distinctions of party, all cabals for favour, and all jealousy in individuals possessing or contending for power, should be entirely suppressed by the wisdom and virtue of one man, whom he calls a sort of standing miracle; and that a whole nation should be so perfect in judgment, and just in practice, as to acknowledge that they were made happy by such exertions. In this extraordinary attempt to reconcile the ideas of a government by prerogative with those of liberty and happiness, he endeavours to bribe the imagination instead of convincing the judgment, by an artificial and brilliant display of all those scenes of splendor and domestic felicity which are so lavishly and exquisitely portrayed in the Cyropaedia of Xenophon, and Fenelon's Telemachus; scenes which adorn the page of the speculative philosopher, but must be considered as mere puerilities from a practical politician.

In giving these reveries to the public, he made use of a specious philosophical jargon, then novel, and calculated to make an impression on ignorant minds; since become more common, and justly exploded, as the cant of hypocrisy or enthusiasm. Its pretensions were founded on candour, liberality of sentiment, universal philanthropy, and a tender concern for the happiness of posterity.

He described himself as labouring to *reinsure the spirit of liberty, to reform the morals, and to raise the sentiments of the people.* He dwelt with rapture on the ideas of perfect government, and the completion of social happiness. He talked of the moral system of the world, the system of infinite wisdom, the universal law

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of reason, of moral duty drawn from the constitution of human nature, of the general fitness of things. He maintained that the shortest and easiest method of arriving at real knowledge, was to trace back government to the first good principles on which it is founded; principles and measures of conduct founded on true propositions, all of which are obvious, many of them self-evident; principles laid in the system of human nature, drawn from that source from whence all the duties of public and private morality must be derived. He boasted of the noble prerogative of governing a society of freemen by a constitution founded on the eternal rules of right reason, and directed to promote the happiness of the whole, and every individual. After some trite observations, that the good of the people is the ultimate and true end of government, and that without liberty no happiness can be enjoyed by society, he styles the king the first servant of the people, considers his right as a trust, and their's, which he calls an indefeasible right, as a property.

From the numberless contradictions and political absurdities to be found in almost every page of his works, I shall select two instances which relate to Walpole. After having described the hideous monster, corruption, and shewn that unless it was annihilated it would swallow up the constitution, and destroy those liberties without which no happiness could be enjoyed by society; after displaying the necessity of shutting up with all the bars and bolts of law, the principal entries through which the torrents of corruption have been let in upon us, he adds, I say the principal entries, because, however it may appear in mere speculation, I think it would not be found in practice to be possible, no nor ELIGIBLE neither, to shut them up.

After having, in a long series of invectives, reprobated in every particular, and reproached the corruption of Walpole, ascribed to that all his power in the cabinet, and in the senate, branded him with the names of high priest, first missionary, and treasurer of corruption, he acknowledges that the ascendancy he had acquired could not be attributed to his superiority of parts, OR HIS CLUMSY TALENT OF BRIBERY alone, but that his long continuance in office must be ascribed to the faintness and indecisiveness of opposition.

In fact, the noble writer himself lived to see the impracticability of his own speculative doctrines. He therefore looked forward to what he called better times, and left his visionary project as a legacy to posterity: I turn myself, he says, from the generation that is going off, to the generation that is coming on the stage. Thus in a few words he confessed, that all his writings, and all his labours were repugnant to the constitution of human nature, as exhibited by his own experience. Fortunately, the baneful effects of Bolingbroke's influence were counteracted by the known profligacy of his principles, and the unpopularity

popularity of his character. For the public prejudice against him was so great, that Pulteney recommended his departure from England, because his co-operation rendered their cause less respectable.

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His speculative effusions; notwithstanding their splendour of diction and graces of style, are not consulted as containing just axioms or practical precepts; except by those who wish to avail themselves of the laxity of his political tenets, and his affectation of recurring to first principles and abstract doctrines, for the purpose of substituting a capricious and theoretical system, in the place of a well defined and limited government.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH:

1723—1725.

Disturbances in Ireland, occasioned by Wood's Patent.—Public and Secret History of that Transaction.—Character of Lord Middleton.—His Disagreement with the Duke of Grafton.—Indiscreet Proceedings of Government.—Embarrassments and Conduct of Walpole.—Duke of Grafton recalled, and Lord Carteret appointed Lord Lieutenant.—Resignation of Lord Middleton.—Surrender of the Patent.—Tranquillity restored.—Tumults in Scotland, on levying the Malt Tax.—Prudent Conduct of Walpole.—Character and Services of the Earl of Ilay.

THE year 1725 teemed with events of the highest importance to the interest and security of England, both in regard to foreign and domestic affairs, and gave sufficient employment to the cabinet. The foreign affairs were distinguished by the celebrated treaties of Vienna and Hanover; the

* Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham, July 23, 1739. Correspondence, Period VII.

† The works of Bolingbroke, principally alluded to, are The Occasional Writer, his Essays in the Craftsman, which were afterwards collected and re-published under the Title of a *Dissertation on Parties*, with a sarcastical dedication to

Sir Robert Walpole, and Oldcastle's Remarks on the History of England; Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism, or the Ideo of a patriot King, &c. His posthumous Letters on the Study of History, have been ably refuted in Horace Walpole's Answer, and in Leland's Reflections.

domestic

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domestic tranquillity was interrupted by disturbances in Ireland, arising from Wood's patent of coinage, and tumults in Scotland, both of which were suppressed by the prudence and vigour of Walpole.

No minister ever suffered more abuse for the indiscretion and violence of others, than Sir Robert Walpole. The tumults in Scotland, on account of the duty on malt, and the disturbances in Ireland, relating to Wood's patent, because they happened under his administration, were solely attributed to his misconduct; whereas the duty on malt was carried in the house of commons by the country gentlemen, in opposition to his sentiments; and the grant of Wood's patent, was an unfortunate legacy left by the earl of Sunderland, in which he had no other share than in passing it when he was at the head of the treasury.

To judge by the accounts generally given of that transaction, it would appear a monster of despotism and fraud, that the halfpence were deficient in weight and goodness, and that the circulation of them would have been followed by the total ruin of Ireland.

In fact, the inimitable humour of Swift, which places the kingdom on one side, and William Wood on the other, has misled our judgment and captivated our imagination; and most persons have formed their opinion from his Drapier's Letters and satirical poems, rather than from authentic documents or well attested facts. The simple narrative of this transaction, stripped of the exaggerated dress in which the malignant wit of the author has invested it, is reduced to a short compass.

Grant of
Wood's pa-
tent.

There being great deficiency of copper currency in Ireland, the king, in virtue of his prerogative, granted to William Wood, a patent for coining farthings and halfpence, to the value of £100,000 sterling, on certain terms which the patentee was bound to follow. William Wood, who in the party language of Swift is ridiculed under the denomination of a *hardware man* and a *low mechanic*, was a great proprietor and renter of iron works in England. He had a lease of all the mines on the crown lands in thirty-nine counties, was proprietor of several iron and copper works, and carried on, to a very considerable amount, manufactures for the different preparations of those metals*. Among many proposals submitted to government, that which he delivered was accepted, and was considered by all persons of judgment or capacity, not biased by party or national prejudice, as beneficial to Ireland.

Ferment in
Ireland.

But the natives did not see it in so favourable a light, and before the money was circulated, a general ferment was excited. The ostensible causes of complaint were derived from the consideration, that the king had treated

* Anderson's Commerce, vol. III. p. 124.

Ireland as a dependant kingdom *, that the patent was granted to a person who was not a native, that the coin was stamped in England, and that as a great profit was likely to be derived, the benefit should have principally accrued to the public. All the attempts of the duke of Grafton, then lord lieutenant, to subdue the public aversion were ineffectual. The spirit of opposition seized all orders of men, and even many of the king's servants, who held the chief places under his administration.

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Inflamed by national zeal, the two houses passed addresses to the crown accusing the patentee of fraud and deceit, asserting that the terms of the patent were infringed both in the quantity and quality of the coin, that the circulation of the halfpence would be highly prejudicial to the revenue, destructive of the commerce, and of most dangerous consequence to the rights and properties of the subjects: the commons, with an absurdity and effrontery hardly credible, declared, that even had the terms of the patent been complied with, the nation would have suffered a loss at least of *one hundred and fifty per cent*! and indeed the whole clamour rested on partial or ignorant representations. It was not at that time expected or dwelt on as a matter of speculative propriety, that the weight of the copper coin should be adequate to its circulating value; and the assertion that Wood had carried on notorious frauds and deceptions in the coinage, as advanced by Swift, and that the intrinsic was not equal to one eighth of the nominal value, was proved to be false by an assay made at the mint, under Sir Isaac Newton, and his two associates, men of no less honour than capacity, the result of which was, that in weight, goodness, and fineness, it rather exceeded than fell short of the conditions of the patent.

But the clamour, however unjust, was raised, and became general; and it was a necessary act of prudence, not to increase the ferment, by forcing upon a nation what was considered as unjust and fraudulent. Lord Carteret, who succeeded the duke of Grafton in the office of lord lieutenant, failed no less than his predecessor, in all his endeavours to obtain the introduction of the copper money. The patent was surrendered, and tranquillity restored. Wood, as an indemnification for the loss he had sustained, received pensions to the amount of £. 3,000 a year for eight years †.

Surrender of
the Patent.

Such is the public history of Wood's patent; and it is difficult to conceive by what means or by what intrigues this simple transaction, calculated for the benefit of Ireland, and in which not a single right was infringed, or a

Secret history
of the trans-
action.

* See Primate Boulter's Letters.

† Correspondence.

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single grievance inflicted, could be so misunderstood and perverted, as to create a general ferment, and nearly to overthrow the administration of Townshend and Walpole. The secret history of this event, which the documents, under my inspection, enable me to give, will assist in tracing the motives and causes which gave rise to the disturbances, and finally occasioned the surrender of the patent.

The emoluments arising from the disposal of the patent for supplying Ireland with copper coin, were given by Sunderland to the duchess of Kendal, who sold it to Wood. Sunderland had warmly recommended it to his friend, the duke of Bolton, who was at that time lord lieutenant; but he met with so much difficulty in his attempts to countenance and support the project under hand, that he had neither courage or inclination to propose a scheme which he foresaw would greatly embarrass his administration. On his death, the duke of Grafton was promoted to that high office, at the recommendation of Walpole; he consented to bring it forward, and was promised the support of the king's friends in Ireland.

Walpole's reluctance.

Walpole, on succeeding Sunderland at the head of the treasury, instantly saw and appreciated the difficulties in which this transaction would involve him; and with as much frankness as his situation at that time would permit, remonstrated against the grant, as likely to become unpopular; but being unwilling to offend the duchess of Kendal, the extent of whose influence over the king, he had unfortunately experienced, reluctantly submitted to what he could not prevent, and employed every means in his power to remedy the abuses and obviate the difficulties. He took the advice of the attorney and solicitor general, obtained the ratification of the lord chancellor of England, and by proper assays at the mint, secured the execution of the terms stipulated by the patent, which at length passed the usual forms, and was sent to the lord lieutenant for the purpose of being put into execution.

Duke of Grafton, lord lieutenant.

When the duke of Grafton returned to Ireland in August 1723, things were in a state very different from that in which they had been erroneously represented to him by the English cabinet. He found a ferment rising in the nation; a general aversion to the patent; and a most decided opposition from those who, as he had reason to believe, had promised their warmest support. The character and conduct of the duke of Grafton, were not calculated to conciliate parties, or to restore union and harmony in a country like Ireland, distracted with troubles, and abounding with persons disaffected to the English government. He was a nobleman of high honour and disinterested probity; but proud and imperious, fretful and choleric, and highly conscious

of his dignified situation. Though by no means deficient in abilities, yet he did not possess sufficient skill and address to guide the helm of state in a difficult period: he was well characterised by his friend, Walpole, as *a fair weather pilot, that did not know how to act, when the first storm arose.*

The success of the measure was principally impeded by the unexpected and inflexible opposition of lord chancellor Middleton, who has, on that account, incurred the bitter reproaches of Walpole, Townshend, and the duke of Grafton, in their correspondence with each other. Upon a candid review of his conduct, however, it appears that he was actuated by no improper motives, but, in common with many other persons in Ireland, considered the plan imprudently introduced, and inimical to the true interests of the country. The private letters which passed between him, his brother, and son, and which I am enabled to lay before the public, will afford a clear explanation of his motives; and a comparison of them with those of the two ministers, and of the duke of Grafton, relieve the characters of each party from much of that obloquy which flowed from the rage of discordant politics.

Alan Brodrick*, descended from an illustrious family, whose ancestors may be traced from the conquest, was second son of Sir *Saint John Brodrick*, knight, of Richmond in Yorkshire, and of Wandsworth, who obtained a grant of lands, in the county of Monaghan, during the government of Oliver Cromwell. He performed such essential services in assisting the restoration, that he procured a farther grant of a large estate in the county of Corke, and obtained a charter from Charles the Second, for the town of Middleton to return two members to parliament.

Alan was bred up to the law, and rose to such eminence in that profession, that in 1695, he was appointed solicitor general, and being chosen member for the city of Corke in 1703, he was unanimously elected speaker of the house of commons, attached himself to the Whigs, and having opposed some bills which were favoured by the duke of Ormond, lord lieutenant, he was removed from the place of solicitor general. In 1707, when the Whig administration was formed, he was made attorney general, and in 1709, chief justice of the Queen's Bench; but was removed in 1711, when the Tories came into power. He was chosen, in 1713, member for the county of Corke, and again elected speaker by the Whigs, in opposition to the castle interest.

During the last years of queen Anne, he proved his faithful attachment to the religion and constitution, by promoting the succession of the house of

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Opposition
and character
of lord Mi-
dleton.

* Lodge's Irish Peerage.—Communications from the honourable William Brodrick.

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Hanover, and was highly instrumental in counteracting the cabals of those who were inclined to restore the Pretender. In reward for these eminent services, he was, at the accession of George the First, nominated chancellor of Ireland, in 1715 was created a peer, by the title of baron Brodrick, and in 1717, advanced to the dignity of viscount Midleton. In the same year he was also chosen member of the British Parliament for Midhurst in Sussex, which borough he continued to represent till his death. When the functions of his high office did not render his presence necessary in Ireland, his eloquence and abilities were useful in supporting the measures of government in England.

As he considered himself obliged to Sunderland for his promotion to an Irish peerage, he attached himself to the party of that minister. But neither his obligation or interest could induce him to swerve from his duty to his country, or to support administration in measures which he disapproved. He resisted all the solicitations, offers and menaces of Sunderland, to vote in favour of the peerage bill, and he persisted in opposition to the request of the lord lieutenant, and the orders of the sovereign. The minutes * of his conversations with Sunderland and others on that occasion, and the rules which he laid down for his conduct, afford evident proofs of his integrity and firmness, and do honour to his memory. His refusal in this instance offended Sunderland, and nothing but the difficulty of finding a proper successor for the office of lord chancellor prevented his disgrace. He was treated however, with so much coldness and disregard, that for three years he expected every moment to be dismissed; a situation of uncertainty, which he bore with unexampled patience and dignity.

On the death of Sunderland, he attached himself to Carteret, in opposition to Townshend and Walpole. He joined to a natural warmth and vehemence of temper, which he himself was the first to acknowledge, an high consciousness of his own talents and influence, which produced an unbending pertinacity of opinion, and a display, often ostentatious, of his own services and importance. He possessed great dignity of sentiment, and a spirit so independent, that he would not permit even his personal esteem for the king to bias his conduct in the duties of his high station; he considered the salary of office his due for his exertions as chancellor, and thought himself at liberty to act, vote, and speak in parliament (as a lord) just in the same manner while he was on the woolsack, as he would have done on one of the benches †.

The warmth of his temper was increased by the still greater warmth of his brother and son.

* Correspondence. Article Peerage Bill.

† See Correspondence.

His elder brother, Thomas Brodrick, had from his first entrance into life, uniformly promoted the Protestant succession. He was a member of the privy council to king William, and sat in the English parliament for the borough of Stockbridge, and afterwards for Guildford; and in the Irish parliament for the county of Corke. In consideration of his services, he was by the Whig administration made comptroller of the salt duties, and joint comptroller of the army with Sir Philip Meadows, which places he resigned in 1711, when the Tories came into power. On the accession of George the First, he was again appointed a member of the privy council, but was not gratified with any place. As chairman of the secret committee for the examination of the South Sea affairs, he had acquired great popularity, and had stood forth one of the warmest advocates for severe and rigorous measures against the directors, and those who had in any degree promoted the South Sea scheme. As a Whig, he was strongly attached to the principles of that party; generally supported government, but not uniformly; possessed great weight among the country gentlemen inclined to the Whig interest, and not unfrequently had proposed and carried questions in opposition to the known sentiments of the minister. He was held in high estimation by the king, as the head of a family which had ever shewn an unabated zeal in favour of his succession; and had been courted by Sunderland, and after his death, by Carteret and Roxburgh. He was a man of high spirit and probity, but his temper was violent, captious, and overbearing.

Saint John Brodrick, son of lord Middleton, was not deficient in talents and knowledge; possessed great skill in debating, which he managed with good effect in the Irish house of commons, where his father's advice and interest rendered him highly respected. He was presumptuous and confident; sanguine in his hopes, and vehement in his pursuits; affecting great foresight, sagacity, and discernment. He was highly irritable, readily provoked, but open to flattery and easy of delusion. He was first chosen a member of the Irish parliament for the borough of Middleton, and afterwards represented, until his death, the city of Corke. He was elected in 1721, and in the new parliament, which assembled in 1722, for Beralston, in Devonshire.

Both the brother and son caballed with lord Carteret, and seem to have conceived a violent antipathy against Walpole, which was heightened by his opposing the bill for permitting the importation of Irish calicoes. The proud consciousness entertained by lord Middleton of his abilities and influence in Ireland, was increased by the repeated accounts transmitted from his brother and son, of the king's high sense of the services rendered by the whole family, and by Carteret's repeated declarations, that he alone was capable

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Thomas Brodrick,

and of Saint
John Brodrick.

Their antipathy to Walpole.

of

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Misunder-
standing be-
tween Graf-
ton and Mi-
dleton.

of governing Ireland. His opposition received an additional impulse from the sanguine representations of his son, that the power of Walpole was declining, and a full conviction that the combination of Cadogan, Carteret, and Roxburgh, would triumph in the cabinet.

An unfortunate misunderstanding had taken place between the duke of Grafton and lord Midleton, who, in the capacity of one of the lord's justices, had directed the administration of affairs, and conscious of his influence in the two houses of parliament, expected to retain the same power on the arrival of the new lord lieutenant. The duke of Grafton, however, was by no means inclined to place implicit confidence in the chancellor, who had shewn so many instances of an intractable temper, and hostility to Walpole. He courted the opposite party in the cabinet, and particularly consulted his competitor for authority, William Conolly, speaker of the house of commons, by whom he was almost implicitly directed. On his arrival in Ireland in 1723, he was offended at the chancellor, for disrespectful behaviour, and bitterly complained to the archbishop of Dublin, who being inimical to Wood's patent, did not conceal, or perhaps exaggerated the dissatisfaction of the lord lieutenant. The conduct of lord Midleton in parliament was so offensive to the duke of Grafton, that he connived at the passing of a vote of censure in the house of lords, for delays of justice, occasioned by his absence from Ireland. This insult, solely ascribed, by lord Midleton, to the duke of Grafton, increased the misunderstanding; and the duke was so incensed, that he peremptorily insisted on his exclusion from the number of lords justices during his absence.

Dec. 23,
1723.

Causes of the
unpopularity
of the patent.

These jealousies, fomented by Carteret, laid the foundation of a successful opposition to the introduction of Wood's coinage, which opposition was aided by the concurrence of indiscreet and unpopular proceedings.

Great discredit was thrown upon the measure, by a report, industriously circulated, that the profits of the patent were to be shared between Wood and the duchess of Kendal. This fact was insidiously communicated by Carteret, to Alan Brodrick, second son of lord Midleton, during his visit at Hanover, transmitted by him to his friends in Dublin, and soon made public by various allusions of Swift, in his writings and political ballads, in one of which he says:

"When late a feminine magician,
"Join'd with a brazen politician,
"Expos'd, to blind a nation's eyes,
"A parchment of prodigious size *."

* A Simile on our Want of Silver, and the only Way to remedy it.

The

The indiscretion of Wood, and of his friends in Ireland, was also detrimental to his cause. They exaggerated the quantity of coin to be issued, and the gains which would accrue to the patentee, and made repeated boasts of his power and influence in the English cabinet. Wood himself offended the privy council, by observing, that if a proclamation was necessary, he could have it, or any thing that was wanting to enforce the currency of his coin; and that the complaints and remonstrances were not intended against him, but against the king and ministry for making the grant.

The misconduct of government was still greater. The patent was passed without formally consulting either the lord lieutenant or privy council, and its contents were concealed in Ireland: by these means exaggerated rumours of its evil tendency were diffused, which were universally credited, and not found to be false, until their wide circulation had made a deep impression on the public mind, which it was impossible to efface. The lord lieutenant landed on the 13th of August. He had scarcely assumed the reins of government, before he publicly declared, that he was perfectly unconcerned in the event, that the patent was passed before he was made acquainted that it was in agitation, and that he had no instructions about it from the king or the ministry. On the 13th of September, an address was presented from both houses, requesting information concerning the patent. In his answer, returned the 14th, he declared that he had neither the patent, nor any copy, nor even any paper which would give them any satisfaction; but on the 16th, when the house was actually assembled with a view to make a strong remonstrance on the subject, Hopkins, the secretary to the lord lieutenant, informed the speaker, that a person attended without with the exemplification of the patent, which, by mistake, had been delivered to the lord lieutenant's servant, instead of his private secretary, and mislaid.

Even after the irresistible opposition which shewed itself in parliament, no attempts were made to soften or conciliate those members who were against the patent; on the contrary, some were received at the castle with coldness; others were treated with marks of indignity, and Saint John Brodrick was slighted and offended. By these means, the lord lieutenant precluded all confidential intercourse with the chancellor and his friends, who were prevented from explaining the motives of their conduct, and undeceiving him in those points in which he had been misinformed.

The conduct of Walpole himself was not at first marked with his usual caution. He suffered the lord lieutenant to depart without specific instructions in what manner he was to act, should the parliament oppose the introduction of the coinage. He trusted too much to the representations of those who were friends to

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1723 to 1725.

Indiscretion
of Wood,

and of go-
vernment.

Conduct of
Walpole.

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1720 to 1727.

to government, and who were either ignorant of the real situation of affairs, or unwilling to offend, by transmitting disagreeable truths which they well knew would be communicated by others. He did not sufficiently appreciate the great influence of the chancellor and his family, in both houses of parliament, and when that influence appeared predominant, he attributed the strength of opposition solely to the combination of the Brodricks with lord Carteret. He bitterly accused lord Midleton of treachery and low cunning, of having made, in his speeches, distinctions between the king and his ministers, of caballing with Carteret, Cadogan, and Roxburgh, and of pursuing that line of conduct, because he was of opinion the opposite party in the cabinet would gain the ascendancy. He did not believe the disturbances to be so serious as they were represented, nor was he satisfied with the duke of Grafton's conduct, as being solely directed by Conolly, but declared that the part acted by Conolly, *almost excused what the Brodricks had done* *.

Notwithstanding this confession, he resolved to support the duke of Grafton in his resentment against the chancellor, and obtained from the king a promise, that he should be removed whenever it was thought expedient, and the formal notification was made by lord Carteret to the lord lieutenant. But his removal was considered at the present moment impracticable, by the temper and situation of Ireland, and by the influence of lord Midleton's friends in the British cabinet.

Carteret complained to the king, that his majesty's name and authority had been used to gratify the private pique and resentment of the lord lieutenant against the chancellor; imputed the disturbances of Ireland principally to that source, and induced the king to declare that those ought to be employed who were most capable of serving him. Thomas Brodrick, in an audience of the king, expostulated against the proposed indignity of excluding his brother from the list of lords justices, proved the weakness of the duke of Grafton's government, and the preponderancy of the chancellor's party, which sufficiently appeared from the vote of congratulation, passed by the commons, in favour of lord Midleton, contrary to the avowed influence of the lord lieutenant. This remonstrance effectually convinced the king of the impropriety of the measures which had been hitherto pursued, and irritated him to such a degree, that Walpole became ashamed and uneasy at the conduct of the lord lieutenant, which brought him into the greatest difficulties he had ever experienced. He discovered that he had been deceived by the misrepresentations sent from Ireland, that lord Midleton had great power

* Correspondence.

and

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1723 to 1725.

and influence, and could not be dispensed with in the formation of a cabinet. Resolved to withdraw his support from the duke of Grafton, and effect his removal, he had determined to obtain the appointment either for the duke of Bolton, or the duke of Dorset, and the arrangement was on the point of being made; when the duke of Argyle embarrassed him, by claiming that high dignity for himself. This unexpected demand suspended the execution of his plan, and together with the increasing ferment in Ireland, rendered it expedient to adopt a new line of conduct. He found that a question of the highest consequence was involved in this dispute, no less than the independence of Ireland; a favourite topic, urged by Molineux, promoted by the archbishop of Dublin, and ably supported by Swift, in his *Drapier's Letters*, and other publications. He was too prudent to suffer this delicate subject to be discussed in parliament. He held frequent conferences with Saint John Brodrick, who had taken his seat in the English parliament, attentively listened to his accounts of the proceedings, confessed that he had been grossly misled, spoke in terms of the highest respect of the chancellor's character and talents, insinuated that the duke of Grafton was about to be recalled, and was only continued in his post until a proper successor could be appointed; disclaimed any intention of excluding lord Middleton from being one of the lord justices, and succeeded so far as to soften, in some measure, the violent asperity which had long distinguished that family.

At this period the struggle * in the cabinet, which terminated in the triumph of Townshend and Walpole, was finally decided. It had been their original intention to remove Carteret entirely, but the embarrassment arising from the claim of the duke of Argyle, and the great difficulty of managing Ireland, rendered it necessary to find a person who would promote the patent, and be likely to persuade lord Middleton, and those who acted with him, to soften their opposition. In this dilemma, lord Carteret was removed from the office of secretary of state to the lord lieutenancy of Ireland. Lord Middleton was continued in the office of chancellor, constituted one of the lord justices, and Saint John Brodrick was nominated a member of the privy council.

Carteret lord
lieutenant.

At the same time every effort was made to conciliate the people of Ireland, and to induce them to receive the currency. A report was drawn up by Walpole †, and submitted to the king in council. After fully justifying Wood

Walpole's
report.

* See chapter 24.

† The original is in Sir Robert Walpole's hand writing, among the Orford Papers.

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from the charge of not having fulfilled the terms of his contract, and shewing that his halfpence exceeded in value and weight the conditions required in the patent, it recommended to the king, that it would be advisable to order, that instead of £. 100,000, Wood should be permitted to import into Ireland only £. 40,000, to be current to such as voluntarily pleased to accept them: the king sent his order in conformity to this advice.

Increasing
disturbances.

The report, though drawn up with great precision and clearness, made no impression. It was answered by Swift in the *Drapier's Letters*; his hardy assertions and false representations were implicitly believed, and the popular outcry was so violent, that the lords justices refused to issue the orders for the circulation of the coin. A general panic seized even the king's best friends, who were apprehensive of popular commotions. People of all descriptions and parties flocked in crowds to the bankers to demand their money, and drew their notes with an express condition to be paid in gold or silver. The publishers of the most treasonable pamphlets escaped with impunity, provided Wood and his patent were introduced into the work. The grand juries could scarcely be induced to find any bill against such delinquents; no witnesses in the prosecution were safe in their persons; and no juries were inclined, or if inclined could venture, to find them guilty*. Not content with refusing to bring in a bill of indictment against the printer of the *Drapier's Letters*, the next grand jury of Dublin, in a presentment drawn up by Swift, presented all persons as enemies to the government, who should endeavour, by fraud or otherwise, to impose Wood's halfpence on the people.

Moderation
of Walpole.

In this alarming state of affairs, Walpole acted with becoming moderation: he saw that the popular frenzy was so strong, that it would be madness to attempt introducing the copper currency by force; that to repeat the orders to the lords justices, who had declared their resolution not to obey them, would only again expose the king's honour, without the smallest hopes of success; that although to permit them to continue after that refusal, would be to renounce for ever all authority of the crown, yet to remove them on this account, would increase their popularity so much, that they might be able to counteract the measures of government†. He resolved, therefore, to act a temporising part; to send over lord Carteret without a moment's delay to bring the people gradually to a proper temper; to suspend or surrender the patent as circumstances required; and, after the restoration of tranquillity, to remove the chancellor, and to appoint

* Primate Boulter's Letters.

† Correspondence.

new lords justices, of whom, at least the majority should be natives of England.

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1723 to 1725.

Motives of
Carteret's
conduct.

On his arrival in Ireland, Carteret found himself in a very delicate and embarrassed situation, and at first view his whole conduct in this transaction is mysterious and inexplicable. He had secretly opposed the patent, fomented the discontents and jealousies of lord Midleton and the Brodricks, and excited, underhand, the disturbances in Ireland. In the frequent conferences which he held with Thomas and Saint John Brodrick, accounts of which were transmitted to lord Midleton, he appeared so hostile to the patent, that Saint John Brodrick says of him, "Lord Carteret is perfectly free from all *suspicion* of being concerned in, or wishing well to this base project *;" and lord Midleton suspected that Wood's patent would be insisted on by Walpole, merely with a view to embarrass lord Carteret, and create difficulties to his administration †. But he had no sooner taken upon him the office of lord lieutenant, than he promoted the introduction of the copper coin with so much zeal, as induced lord Midleton, who was astonished at the change of his sentiments, to observe, that he could not have employed more industry to attain his end, even if the success of his labours would be attended with an entire restitution of the favour and authority which he formerly enjoyed.

The motives of his conduct are well explained by lord Midleton, in his letters to his brother. His secret sentiments were strongly in favour of the patent, because it was proposed by his friend Sunderland, and he always maintained its validity, as derived from the prerogative of the king, which vested in the crown the right of coining money. But with a view to embarrass Walpole and Townshend, whom he wished to remove, he secretly favoured the opposition in Ireland, caballed with the Brodricks, spoke slightly of the duke of Grafton, and insinuated that the duchess of Kendal had a share in the profits of the patent. He exaggerated the alarm, and irritated the king by repeated representations, that the discontents in Ireland were owing to the umbrage which the duke of Grafton had given to lord Midleton. His hopes of overturning his rivals by these means were so sanguine, as induced him to acknowledge to Saint John Brodrick, that the patent was the luckiest incident that could have occurred in favour of his party in the cabinet. But he was no sooner convinced that his credit with the king was declining, and that he should be removed from the office of secretary of state, than he prevented his total disgrace by agreeing to accept the lord lieutenancy

* Saint John Brodrick to lord Midleton, May 10, 1724.

† Correspondence, p. 425.

Period III.
1725 to 1727.

Resignation
of lord Mi-
dleton.

May 1725.

Surrender of
the patent
announced
by the lord
lieutenant.

under the promise of promoting the patent, and of prevailing with his friend lord Midleton to desist from his opposition. He confided in his own efforts and address to effect the introduction of the money, when lowered to £. 40,000; and to stop the discussion on the question concerning the independency of Ireland.

In conformity with these promises, lord Carteret employed all his address, and used the great influence which he possessed over his friend, to prevail on him to promote, or at least not to oppose the introduction of the coin. But all his efforts failed. Neither flattery, promises, or threats, had any effect; Midleton uniformly and decidedly persisted in his opposition; while he expressed the highest obligation to the lord lieutenant, he declared that his duty to his country was paramount to every other consideration, and refused to give any assistance to government, until the patent was absolutely surrendered. This conduct drew upon him the resentment of his former friend: he was received at the castle with coldness and reserve, and considered as an enemy to the king's government; he accordingly resigned the seals with disgust, and Richard West, one of the king's counsel, was appointed lord chancellor in his place.

The inflexibility of lord Midleton annihilated all hopes of success; the king followed the advice suggested by Walpole, and consented to procure the surrender of the patent. In the speech from the throne, the lord lieutenant observed, "I have his majesty's commands at the opening of this session, to acquaint you, that an entire end is put to the patent, formerly granted to Mr. Wood, for the coining of copper halfpence and farthings for this kingdom, by a full and effectual surrender thereof to his majesty, an exemplification of which, under the great seal of Great Britain, shall be laid before you. So remarkable an instance of his majesty's royal favour and condescension, must fill the hearts of a loyal and obedient people with the highest sense of duty and gratitude; and I doubt not, but you will make such suitable returns as may convince the world, that you are truly sensible of the happiness you have enjoyed under his majesty's most mild and gracious government, ever since his accession to the throne of these kingdoms; and that the preservation of all our religious and civil rights must ever be owing, under God, to the support of his majesty's government, and the succession in his royal house *."

The gracious manner in which the surrender of the patent was announced, in compliance with the wishes of the nation, did not satisfy the party in

* Historical Register, 1725.

opposition.

opposition. Their great object was to shew that the surrender was solely owing to the king, and to cast reproaches on the English administration, as if they had occasioned the disturbances, by promoting the patent, and had been uniformly averse to its revocation. With this view, when the primate moved an address of thanks to the lord lieutenant for his speech at the opening of the session, particularly to express their grateful sense of the king's goodness and condescension for putting an end to Wood's patent, the archbishop of Dublin proposed inserting the words, "and great wisdom," observing, in justification of this amendment, that the ministers had been the authors of the patent, but that the king had been wise enough to see the mischiefs, and accordingly revoked it. He was powerfully seconded by lord Middleton, and the motion for the amendment was carried. For the purpose of counteracting this suggestion, the primate laid before the committee, an address somewhat differing in form from the resolution of the house, and with the omission of the words *great wisdom*; but the lords in opposition insisting, that the committee was bound to receive those expressions, the primate was compelled to add them. On the 23d, however, the friends of government obtained their point. When the report of the address from the committee was laid before the house, a motion was made to leave out the obnoxious words; and after a strenuous opposition, in which lord Middleton exerted himself with great ability and with much petulance, was carried by 21 against 12*.

This victory decided, in favour of government, the struggle in the house of lords, and the decision of the first question in the commons, promised a similar issue. An address was moved, acknowledging the king's great goodness and condescension in obtaining a full and effectual surrender of the patent, and expressing a grateful sense of all favours, and of the many blessings enjoyed under his mild and gracious government. The unanimity with which this address was carried, without a single dissenting voice, seemed to augur a quiet and successful session; but the friends of lord Middleton, amongst whom Saint John Brodrick was the most able and the most violent, excited a warm opposition, which required some time and much management before it subsided.

When a proposal for a supply was laid before the house, it was agreed to in general terms; but the grant was delayed under various pretences. A committee being appointed to examine the public accounts, and the amount of the national debt, the statement of government was not allowed. The

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1723 to 1725.

Proceedings
in the house
of lords,and in the
commons.

* Primate Boulter's Letters, p. 35.

Period III.

1726 to 1727.

debt was said to be magnified with a view to obtain a larger sum than was requisite, and it was particularly objected, that no credit was given for cash in the hands of the collectors, and for several solvent branches of the revenue not yet received; various resolutions were passed, which embarrassed government, or delayed the payment of the army; a tax on salaries, profits of employment, places and pensions, was carried in opposition to the castle interest: But after some struggle, the ways and means were voted *, and on the 8th of March the lord lieutenant put an end to this stormy session.

1726.

The ferment having subsided, and public confidence being restored by these prudent compliances, lord Midleton quitted Ireland, and settled in England until the time of his death †. Carteret was permitted to retain only a nominal power; the principal authority was vested in Dr. Hugh Boulter, who had, from the bishoprick of Bristol, been raised, in 1724, to the primacy of Ireland, and a resolution was adopted of filling the high charges of state with the natives of England, which the primate considered as an essential requisite for the maintenance of public tranquillity, and for the ease of those who governed in Ireland ‡.

During the progress of the disturbances in Ireland, Scotland became the scene of similar agitations.

Duty on malt
evaded in
Scotland.

Since the union, the natives of Scotland had objected to the payment of many taxes imposed by the British parliament on the united kingdoms, and had shewn themselves particularly averse to the duty on malt, which they long evaded under various pretences.

Proposal to
enforce it.

The English country gentlemen were highly dissatisfied with this exemption of the Scotch from a burden which was considered as heavy and grievous. Accordingly, when in a committee of ways and means, the continuance of the malt tax was proposed, Thomas Brodrick moved to adjourn the committee till Monday, for the purpose of considering of a method for obliging

1724.
February 7.

* Proceedings of the parliament in Ireland, Historical Register for 1725.

† Before his return to England, Fawkener, the printer, requested permission to dedicate the Drapier's Letters to him, as the preserver of Irish liberty, and the father of his country, but he declined it in terms of high indignation.

‡ It redounds, indeed, much to his honour, that although lord Midleton refused to support the patent, yet he condemned, in the strongest terms, the violent conduct of Swift, and of his patron the archbishop of Dublin,

whom he represents as the two persons from whose politics and wrangling, Ireland had received more damage than it could have been in the power of its worst enemies to have brought upon it.—Lord Midleton to Thomas Brodrick, November 17, 1724. Correspondence.—Lord Midleton died in 1727.

† Primate Boulter's Letters, p. 19. The contents of this chapter are principally drawn from the letters in the Orford, Townshend, Walpole, and Midleton Papers, Correspondence, Period III.

Scotland

Scotland to pay a proportionate part of the duty on malt. Walpole, foreseeing the evil effects which might result from using compulsory means, opposed the motion*; but finding the sense of the house against him, prudently suffered the adjournment to pass without a division. On the next meeting, however, of the committee, he contrived to evade any alteration in the bill, which was continued as usual for one year. But the clamours of the country gentlemen were so violent, that in the next session it was proposed, that instead of the duties on malt in Scotland, a duty of sixpence should be paid for every barrel of beer or ale; and the question was carried by a majority of 133 votes against 41 †.

This act had scarcely passed before the people of Scotland were influenced by misstatements of its tendency, and by a partial representation of the relative situations of Scotland and England. A legal argument was drawn up with much skill, put into familiar language, circulated with great activity, and had an alarming effect upon the public mind. It was thus stated: The Scots act of Charles the Second, passed in 1681, stands yet unrepealed, which declares that the right of succession to the crown shall devolve according to proximity of blood; that no difference in religion can alter or divert it; and that it is high treason, by writing, speaking, or otherways to endeavour any alteration or diversion, or to debar the successor from the immediate, actual, and free administration of the government. The only bar to the validity of this act, is the treaty of union, which was contracted by two independent kingdoms, and was to remain in force as long, and no longer, than each fulfilled its articles. It is universally acknowledged by the public law of nations, and confirmed by the reason of the law which prevails in private contracts, that the violation of any material articles of a compact is a legal dissolution of the whole. The resolutions of the house of commons, which transferred the duty on malt to a duty on beer, being contrary to the 6th and 7th articles of the Union, will dissolve that Union; the dissolution of the Union, by bringing the Scots act into force, instantly dethrones George the First, and renders the next in succession of the line of Stuarts king of Scotland. The people are released from their oath to the dissolved government, and under no obligation to obey the laws of the revenue; and the commissions of the judges who are entrusted with the execution of those laws, are become void. It was also observed, that the annual

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Opposed by
Walpole.

10th.

December,
carried.

Means employed to in-
flame the
Scots.

* Saint John Brodrick to Lord Middleton, February 8, 1723. Correspondence.

† Political State for December 1724, p. 593.

Period III. of history afford many instances, where infractions of compacts, though considered at the time of little consequence, have proved no less destructive to the party which made the encroachments, than to those who were oppressed. Israel having once revolted, upon a trifling occasion, from Judah, the seat of government, powerful in wealth and arms, could never be reduced to obedience, and became a separate kingdom. Sweden, joined to Denmark by the union of Calmar, was released from its dependence by the breach of that union on the part of Denmark; and a defender was found in Gustavus Vasa, who restored liberty to his native country. The United Provinces, oppressed by taxes, and shackled in the free exercise of religion, shook off the yoke of Spain, under the powerful government of Philip the Second; the Scots gave sufficient proofs of their resistance to repeated oppressions under the reigns of Charles the Second, and James the Seventh, and they are now called upon to resist the tyranny of the minister, who keeps the king and country in chains, and is attempting to rivet a tax on this country, which is an infringement of the Union, and hostile to their liberty and independence*.

Tumults at
Glasgow.

These representations had a strong effect, and a general ferment took place, in a country like Scotland, which teemed with Jacobites, and where, according to the expressions of the earl of Ilay, *by a long series of no-administrations, the mere letter of the law had little or no effect with the people.* The public discontent broke out at Glasgow on the 21st of June, when the commissioners of the excise were preparing to do their duty, and the people threatened to stone them if they attempted to visit the malt-houses. Application being made to general Wade, commander in chief of the forces in that part of Scotland, he sent two companies of soldiers, under the command of captain Bushel, for the purpose of supporting the commissioners, and quelling any riot.

The populace assembled in considerable numbers, repeatedly exclaiming, "Down with Walpole, and up with Seaforth; the Mackenies are up in the north, and will soon come to our assistance." They broke open and plundered the house of Daniel Campbell, member for the city; assaulted and drove away the troops, who were finally compelled in their own defence to fire; and after killing and wounding three or four, retreated in good order to Dumbarton.

* Grant's Letter to Sir Robert Walpole. † General Wade's Letter to the duke of Newcastle, July 1, 1726. Walpole Papers.

General Wade, informed of these events, marched with a large body of troops to Glasgow, and accompanied by Duncan Forbes, the lord advocate of Scotland, took quiet possession of the city; arrested some of the rioters, apprehended the magistrates, and conveyed them prisoners to Edinburgh, for being accessary, or at least for having connived at the tumults, and taken no pains to discover the rioters. They were tried by the lords justiciaries; acquitted, and immediately discharged. Captain Bushel, who had been arraigned for murder, according to the forms of law, was convicted and condemned; but as the orders by which he had commanded his troops to fire, had been dictated by self-defence, he was pardoned, and promoted in the service. The rioters at Glasgow were brought to trial; yet such was the lenity of government, that four only, after being scourged, were sentenced to transportation, and one woman was condemned to stand thrice in the pillory.

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Although this tumult at Glasgow, and the riots which took place in a few other towns were suppressed, yet they gave rise to an affair at Edinburgh, which threatened the most serious consequences. The magistrates of Glasgow had been accompanied to Edinburgh by a large body of the inhabitants, who reproached the people for betraying the interests of their country; and upbraided them, that by submitting to the law, they would become the instruments of wreathing about their necks the insupportable bonds of the malt tax *. The acquittal of the magistrates being considered as a victory over government, the popular discontents increased to an alarming degree. The brewers entered into a combination not to give security for the discharge of the new duty, and not to brew if they were judicially called upon for payment. All the maltsters in Scotland depended on this combination of the Edinburgh brewers, who were considered as the chosen champions of Scottish liberty †.

Confederacy
of brewers
at Edinburgh.

The cause of the brewers was highly popular among all ranks and distinctions of men, not only of those who were not employed by government, but even of those who were invested with authority. Some of the lords justiciaries were timid, or lukewarm, others secretly averse to the imposition of the tax; while the justices of the peace, and the magistrates of the principal towns, openly expressed their disapprobation.

But the greatest obstruction arose from the conduct of the duke of Roxburgh, secretary of state for Scotland. He was strongly attached to Carteret and Cadogan, and had joined them in attempting to remove Townshend

* Letter from John Campbell to Sir Robert Walpole. Correspondence.

† Letter from the earl of Ilay to Mr. Stewart. Correspondence.

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and Walpole; and aware that his dismissal had been recommended to the king on the removal of Carteret, still continued to augment the division in the cabinet. He now secretly encouraged the discontents in Scotland, and counteracted or delayed the orders of government, which, in virtue of his office, were issued by him. A general opinion also prevailed, that a firm resolution to resist the new imposts with unabating zeal, would be attended with a success similar to the event of the struggle which had been recently made in Ireland, in opposition to Wood's coinage, where the unanimous voice of the country was on the eve of obtaining from government the surrender of the patent.

The brewers were still farther encouraged to persevere, by rumours industriously circulated by persons of credit and consequence, that these severe measures were adopted by the regency, contrary to the inclinations of the king, only for the purpose of supporting Walpole; that in the next session of parliament he would be disgraced; that the chief power would be lodged in the hands of Pulteney, in conjunction with the duke of Roxburgh; and that those who now submitted would be exposed to the resentment of the new administration, and the fury of the populace.

Mission of
the earl of
Ilay.

In this dilemma, the minister, with the approbation of the regency, deputed Archibald, earl of Ilay, lord keeper of the privy seal in Scotland, to Edinburgh, armed with full powers from government, and privately instructed by Walpole, who tempered the violent orders sent from Hanover. The removal of the duke of Roxburgh from the office of secretary of state, which was adopted at the earnest request of Walpole, soon convinced the deluded people, that they had been imposed upon by the enemies of government, in supposing the minister disagreeable to the king, and that his opponents would be triumphant. General Wade, in pursuance of the act of parliament passed in the preceding year, disarmed the highlanders of the most disaffected clans, and the inhabitants of the Isles of Mull and Sky. The spirit and zeal of lord Ilay, broke the combination at Edinburgh, and restored tranquillity; to him Walpole wholly attributed the final suppression of the riots; and the warm praises of his conduct, which he transmitted to the king, do honour to the exertions of the one, and to the gratitude of the other.

From this period lord Ilay became the person in whom Walpole implicitly confided for the management of the Scottish affairs, which he conducted with great ability and prudence, and with so much real authority, that he was called the king of Scotland. The rise, progress, and termination of

these

these tumults, are minutely related in the correspondence which passed between Sir Robert Walpole, lord Townshend and the earl of Ilay *.

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Archibald, earl of Ilay, and afterwards duke of Argyle, on the death of his brother John, was second son of Archibald earl of Argyle. He was born at Ham house, at Peterham, in 1652, educated at Eton, and resided in England until he was about seventeen years of age, when he was sent to the university of Glasgow. Being a younger brother, with a small fortune, he went to Utrecht, and made a considerable proficiency in the civil law, with a design to practise in that line. But his father being created a duke, he renounced this intention, and embraced the profession of arms. He was, when very young, appointed colonel of the 36th regiment of foot, and governor of Dumbarton castle. But finding himself more qualified for a statesman than a soldier, he quitted the army, and with his usual assiduity, employed himself in the acquisition of political knowledge. In 1705, he was appointed lord register of Scotland, and in the ensuing year, was nominated one of the commissioners for settling the union: in consideration of his services, he was created earl of Ilay, and on the conclusion of the treaty was chosen one of the sixteen peers of Scotland, and constantly elected in every future parliament, till his death, excepting that which assembled in 1713. His exclusion at that time, was owing to the zeal with which he had abetted the cause of the Whigs, and promoted the succession of the Protestant line. In 1710, he was made justice general of Scotland.

Character of
the earl of
Ilay.

Although he had long renounced the profession of arms, yet when the rebellion broke out in 1715, he placed himself at the head of a corps of royalists, prevented, by his prudent conduct, general Gordon, at the head of 1,000 men, from penetrating into the Western Highlands; and raising levies, joined the duke of Argyle at Stirling, and was wounded at the battle of Dumblain. His military conduct was only a temporary exertion. His principal merit consisted in his parliamentary abilities, which were very considerable. In his study of the law, he had acquired acuteness of apprehension and method of arrangement. His speeches were replete with solid arguments and keen observations, his language was plain and fluent, and his manner grave and solemn. He continued invariably attached to Sir Robert Walpole, during his long administration, and counteracted, as much as lay in his power, the violence of his brother's politics, when he joined

* Article, Tumults of Scotland.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

opposition. In 1725 he had been nominated keeper of the privy seal, and in 1734, he was made keeper of the great seal, which office he held till his death *.

Walpole, having thus, by timely concession on one hand, and by a due mixture of vigour and moderation on the other, suppressed these alarming disturbances in Ireland and Scotland, expressed, in a letter to lord Townshend, his exultation, his sense of the difficulties from which he had been relieved, and his resolution to avoid similar embarrassments. "I think we have once more got Scotland and Ireland quiet, *if we take care to keep them so.*"

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH:

1725.

Dissolution of the Congress of Cambray.—Origin and Progress of the Union between the Emperor and Spain.—Treaty of Vienna.—Affairs of the North.—Alarms and Conduct of England.—Application to Parliament.

The Emperor and Spain dissatisfied with the quadruple alliance.

I HAVE already observed, that the quadruple alliance, which was concluded with a view to terminate the disputes between the Emperor and the king of Spain, equally displeased both parties. Accordingly both the Emperor and Philip obstructed the success of the negotiations at the congress of Cambray, where attempts were forming, under the mediation of England and France, to settle the final terms of reconciliation between those two powers.

Pretensions of the Emperor.

Besides many other objects in dispute, the Emperor was unwilling to renounce the establishment of the East India company at Ostend, and was still more reluctant to bestow, according to his promise, the investiture of Parma and Tuscany on Don Carlos, from a just apprehension, that the settlement

* For many of these particulars, I am indebted to the obliging communications of lord Frederick Campbell.

of a Spanish branch of the house of Bourbon in Italy, would endanger the security of his dominions in that country.

Philip no less eagerly insisted on the restitution of Gibraltar, which he declared had been promised to him, as the price of his accession to the quadruple alliance, and retarded his evacuation of Sicily and Sardinia, until the investitures of Parma and Tuscany should be bestowed on Don Carlos. The consequence of this mutual repugnance to the terms of the quadruple alliance, was a private overture, made by Philip to the Emperor, and the mission of Ripperda to Vienna, for the purpose of adjusting the conditions of their reconciliation. While this secret negotiation was pending, the resentment of Philip and his queen was inflamed by an event which touched their affections and interests in the tenderest point, and justified, in some measure, the violent proceedings which they instantly adopted.

One principal motive which had induced Philip to accede to the quadruple alliance, was the double marriage between his family and the house of Orleans. Don Carlos was affianced to Mademoiselle Beaujolois, the fourth daughter of the duke of Orleans, and the infanta Maria Theresa, daughter of Philip, by Elizabeth Farnese, was betrothed to the king of France. This arrangement was highly advantageous to both the contracting parties; for as the Infanta was only four years of age, her marriage with Louis the Fifteenth, left the chance of an eventual succession to the crown of France still open, to which Philip and his queen, notwithstanding repeated renunciations, looked with anxious expectation; and should the young king live to consummate the marriage, the infanta of Spain would become queen of France, and their descendants sit on the throne. The regent was no less gratified by the contemplation of his own advantage resulting from the same circumstances; he considered the precarious health of the young king, and the infancy of his bride, as placing at a very remote distance the prospect of a lineal heir; and opposing no obstruction to the hopes he entertained of reigning in his own right, for the security of which, he depended on the promised assistance of England.

During the life of the duke of Orleans, the infanta was treated at Paris as the future queen; but after his death, the duke of Bourbon, in compliance with the general sense of the nation, and in conformity to his own interest, sent back the infanta to Spain, and affianced Louis the Fifteenth to the daughter of Stanislaus, titular king of Poland. This measure, however just or necessary in itself, was conducted with such want of address and circumspection, that it produced an immediate rupture between France and Spain. The abbot de Livry, who was commissioned to open this delicate business,

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Of Spain.

Views of the
duke of Or-
leans.Return of the
infanta.

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Resentment
of the king
and queen of
Spain.

business, was ordered to deliver to the king of Spain, letters from Louis the Fifteenth and the duke of Bourbon, explaining, in respectful terms, the reasons which induced them to send back the infanta. Livry, instead of fulfilling his orders, was no sooner admitted to an audience, than he threw himself on his knees, kissed the king's hands in an agony of despair, burst into tears, and thus betrayed his errand before he offered to deliver the letters. Both the king and queen refused to receive them, turned from him with indignation, and dismissed him from their presence with the greatest marks of ignominy. On receiving a notification from their minister at Paris, that the infanta was to be returned, Livry and the French consul were ordered to quit Madrid in twenty-nine hours, and Philip publicly declared, that Spain could never shed sufficient blood to avenge the insult offered to his family.

On the day which succeeded the issuing of these orders, Philip, in an audience which he gave to the British ambassador *, enumerated, in an agony of resentment, all the aggravating circumstances which had accompanied this insupportable indignity offered to his daughter; he made the most bitter complaints at the manner in which it had been carried into execution; and accused the duke of Bourbon of having added duplicity to insult. He had, they both alledged, repeatedly approved the marriage with the infanta, had even assured their minister at Paris, that the espousals should be celebrated on the 30th of March; he had made this declaration even after the abbot de Livry was commissioned to notify the resolution of dissolving the marriage; and then, without waiting for their answer, had published the resolution in France. The deceit and fraud of this whole proceeding, they observed, were so flagrant as must render them contemptible in the eyes of all Europe, and of their own subjects, did they not feel the highest resentment at such enormous ingratitude. After these expressions, Philip declared his determination of separating himself from France for ever; he trusted this resolution would not occasion any decrease in the friendship of the king of England, but rather draw closer the bands of union and amity. He was determined to place his entire friendship and confidence in him alone; and declared that he should order his plenipotentiaries at Cambray to reject the mediation of France, and to submit the final settlement of the points in dispute, between him and the Emperor, to the sole mediation of England †.

England re-
jects the sole
mediation.

This offer was no sooner declined by George the First, as injurious to his alliance with France, than Philip transferred his resentment to England,

* William Stanhope to the Duke of Newcastle, 19th March, 1725. Harrington Papers.

† William Stanhope to the Duke of Newcastle, Madrid, March 20, 1725. Walpole and Harrington Papers.

broke

broke up the congress of Cambray, and sent immediate orders to baron Ripperda, to conclude the terms of a final reconciliation with the Emperor.

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Ripperda found an easy compliance in the Emperor, who had long been dissatisfied with George, both as king of England and elector of Hanover; as king, for his strict alliance with France, and his refusal to co-operate in excluding Don Carlos from the succession of Parma and Tuscany; and as elector, for the acquisition of Bremen and Verden, and for refusing to pay the enormous fine demanded for the investiture.

The disputes between Spain and the Emperor, which had so long embarrassed and agitated Europe, and which had been rather heightened than composed by the congress of Cambray, were terminated in a few conferences, and the two sovereigns, in whose quarrels such a deluge of blood had been shed, and such immense treasures expended, suddenly contracted an alliance for the mutual support of each other's interests, without the knowledge of those very powers who had so long and ineffectually attempted to negotiate an accommodation between them.

Treaty of
Vienna.

This alliance between the Emperor and Spain, concluded at Vienna, consisted of three separate treaties. By the first, signed on the 30th of April, the two sovereigns confirmed the articles of the quadruple alliance. Charles the Sixth renounced his pretensions to the crown of Spain; Philip acknowledged the Emperor's right to Naples and Sicily, the Milanese, and the Netherlands, and guaranteed the pragmatic sanction, or the succession to the hereditary dominions of the house of Austria, in the female line.

In consequence of this sudden union, the new allies were suspected of forming the most ambitious and dangerous projects. It was not credited that Philip the Fifth would so easily have renounced that just claim, which he could form on the Netherlands, Naples, and Milan, should the Emperor die without issue male, and have guaranteed the whole Austrian succession, in the female line, unless the Emperor, in return, had promised some secret articles in favour of the children of Philip, by Elizabeth Farnese, who wholly governed the counsels of Spain. Influenced by these considerations, England and France were no less alarmed at the treaty of Vienna, than offended at the insult offered to them as mediating powers, in concluding that alliance without their interposition. These suspicions were soon afterwards strengthened by the indiscreet and violent expressions of Ripperda; by intelligence from the British ministers at Madrid and Paris, and from St. Saphorin, the British agent at Vienna; they were confirmed by the immediate demand of the restitution of Gibraltar, made by Spain, as the sole and indispensable condition of the continuation of peace and commerce with England.

Alarms of
England.

It

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Farther treaties.

It soon appeared that a second and third treaty had been signed on the first of May. The second was a treaty of commerce; and supported the establishment of the Ostend company, which the maritime powers considered as contrary to the treaty of Westphalia, and as involving in its consequences the diminution of their Indian trade. The third was a treaty of mutual defence; the two sovereigns guaranteed their respective territories, and engaged to support each other with all their force, should either be attacked; the king of Spain to supply fifteen men of war, 15,000 infantry, and 5,000 horse, or stipulated subsidies instead; the Emperor to bring into the field 30,000 foot and 10,000 horse.

Secret articles.

But besides these conditions, reports of other articles were circulated and believed; that the Emperor promised to give in marriage his daughters, the two arch duchesses, to Don Carlos and Don Philip, the two infants of Spain, and assist in obtaining by force the restitution of Gibraltar, if good offices would not avail. In addition, it was strongly rumoured, and many circumstances induced the ministers to believe, that arrangements were making to place the Pretender upon the throne.

Audience of the Imperial minister.

George the First received the notification of the treaty of Vienna, from Count Staremberg, the Imperial ambassador, with the greatest coldness, and an appearance of the most perfect indifference. In an audience, to which he was introduced by lord Townshend, he began by observing, that on the proposal of Ripperda, at Vienna, to commence a separate treaty, the Emperor had replied, that the congress of Cambray being established for the purpose of settling the disputes between him and the king of Spain, under the mediation of Great Britain and France, he did not see the necessity of altering the train of the negotiation. But when Ripperda insisted (on the part of Spain) that an attempt should be made to compose their differences, the Emperor, reflecting on the difficulties derived from the misunderstanding between Spain and France, and considering that Spain had rejected the mediation of France, and that the king of England had declined the sole mediation, conceived, that for the promotion of the public tranquillity, it was his duty to endeavour to form an amicable compromise with the king of Spain. This attempt had been crowned with success, the treaty was at length signed; he was commanded to communicate a copy of it to the king, and Fonseca, the Imperial minister at Paris, was also commissioned to lay another before the king of France. He observed, that the treaty was in all respects conformable to the quadruple alliance, and only regulated those points, which remained to be adjusted. He remarked,

remarked, that as the Emperor had bound himself by the quadruple alliance, to guarantie the succession to the crowns of England, France, and Spain, Philip had, in conformity to the dictates of reason and justice, consented to guarantie the pragmatic sanction. His Imperial majesty, he said, trusted and hoped that the kings of Great Britain and France would also guarantie that order of succession, by acceding to the treaty; that with this view, an article was inserted for the admission of those powers, who, with the consent of the contracting parties, should accede within a year, and that the article was thus worded, because it was not thought proper to name France, on account of the misunderstanding with Spain. He particularly specified, that although the treaty with Spain was signed, yet the Emperor had ordered his plenipotentiaries not to quit Cambray, until the Spanish ministers had taken their departure. Ripperda, he added, had informed the Emperor, that some points * still remained to be settled between Spain and England; and the king his master requested the Emperor to employ his mediation to that effect. To this request the Emperor had replied, that if those matters related to, and were the consequence of the quadruple alliance, and if the king of England approved it, he would willingly offer his interposition, but that otherwise, he would not interfere.

The king, after receiving the copy, congratulated the Emperor and king of Spain on their reconciliation. He then said, that Spain finding it impossible to overcome the impartiality of the mediators, and to induce them to act in contradiction to the quadruple alliance, had deputed Ripperda with a view to form a direct accommodation with the court of Vienna; that his mission taking place before the quarrel arose between France and Spain, it was not to that event, but to the equity and firmness of England and France, that the overtures from Spain were to be attributed; that the hopes of supporting the public tranquillity, and maintaining the faith of treaties, had induced the mediating powers to exert themselves in attempting to bring the congress of Cambray to a happy conclusion, by settling the objects in dispute, between the Emperor and Spain, which were in themselves so little interesting to the two crowns. He did not take the least notice of the delicacy which the Emperor affected to shew in not being the first to recal his ministers at Cambray, nor of the demand for acceding to the treaty; and he concluded by observing, that in regard to the offer made by the Emperor, of interposing his assistance towards adjusting any differences between England and Spain, he did not recollect that any other subsisted,

Reply of the king.

* Alluding to Gibraltar.

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Audience of
the Spanish
minister.

Affairs of the
north.

except such as related to commerce, and in those there was no occasion for a mediation *.

To the Spanish ambassador, when he notified the treaty, the king expressed his satisfaction at the peace, because he was thereby delivered from a difficult and burdensome mediation; and he added, with a smile, that he hoped the reconciliation would prove as sincere and durable as the parties expected †.

At the moment when the union of the Emperor and Spain threatened the south of Europe with new disturbances, the tranquillity of the north was in danger of being broken by the daring enterprizes of Russia, who seemed to employ, with great effect, the new ascendancy which she had gained as an European power. When Peter the Great had been counteracted in his attempts against Denmark, by the vigorous interposition of England, he turned his views to Sweden, at that time distracted with the troubles naturally derived from a disputed succession, declining under the weak administration of a sovereign almost reduced to a cypher by the new constitution, and enfeebled by factions, natural to a government founded on popular principles, and fomented by a turbulent aristocracy. But he was prevented from taking an active share in the disturbances of Sweden by the Persian war, which carried him from the Baltic to the Caspian sea. At the conclusion of the campaign, he again turned his thoughts to Denmark and Sweden. By gaining the senate, he concluded, in opposition to the king, a defensive alliance with Sweden for twelve years. The aim of this alliance was levelled against Denmark; and a secret article stipulated, that the contracting powers should employ their good offices to obtain the restitution of Sleswic to the duke of Holstein, and if these did not succeed, should have recourse to other measures. He also refused to listen to the overtures of reconciliation with George the First offered through the mediation of France and Sweden, unless the king would bind himself to insist on the restitution of Sleswic. The treaty was scarcely signed, when Peter died; but his wife Catherine, who was raised to the throne by the intrigues and influence of prince Menchikof, adopted all the views of her deceased husband, promoted the cause of her son-in-law with still greater warmth, and made vigorous exertions for the purpose of forcing Denmark to accede to her demands. Thus a new war seemed inevitable, and preparations were made on all sides against an approaching rupture.

Every attempt made by France and England, to reconcile these jarring

* Lord Townshend to St. Saphorin, May 3-14, 1725. Walpole Papers.

† Walpole Papers.

interests,

interests, failed of success. Catherine insisted on the restitution of Sleswic, or an equivalent (which alluded to Bremen and Vehrden) as the indispensable condition of her accommodation with Denmark. In vain the senate exhorted her to try the way of negotiation, and earnestly besought her, "for the ease and relief of her subjects, to countermand the chargeable equipments she had been pleased to order in favour of the duke's pretensions on Sleswic." In answer to these exhortations, the empress warmly replied, "Let not any one of you all, that would be reckoned an honest subject, or hope to enjoy the least share of my favour, dare to offer me such mean spirited advice. The duke of Holstein stripped unjustly of his hereditary dominions, took sanctuary in our country, and threw himself into the arms of my deceased lord for protection; he is since contracted to my daughter, and is himself as dear to me as my own child. I am bound by all the rules of honour, as well as the ties of blood, to see justice done to that unfortunate prince, in whose cause I would not scruple to forego the weakness of my sex, and even to draw a sword, or to put myself at the head of an army: I could content myself with cloaths to keep me warm, and with bread to eat; but I will have you know that my children ought to be, and shall be treated as the offspring of my dear lord, and your sovereign deceased. Whoever of you will aid me in this just cause of my son-in-law, shall be encouraged and rewarded; but whoever dares oppose it, shall feel the utmost weight of my displeasure. If the kings of France and Great Britain are really disposed to help the duke of Holstein in recovering his right, this equipment will facilitate their operations, by intimidating the king of Denmark, and putting him to a constant expence. I know that prince will not be able to rest in his bed, nor to keep a single ship in his harbours unequipped, as long as he sees that the fleet and gallies of Russia, with 50,000 men on board, can in a fortnight's time visit him in the very port of Copenhagen. But let France and Britain refuse their assistance to the duke, while I have Sweden and Prussia on my side, I hope he is in no danger of wanting subsistence. In short, it is for my interest and glory, as well as your's, to convince the world, that I have power to see justice done to my family, and that I am resolved to make use of it; and I know no such way of convincing them of this truth, as by letting them see the effects of it with their own eyes."

At the conclusion of these words, she gave orders, in their presence, to Menchikof and Apraxin, to have the fleet and troops in readiness by the middle of May at their peril *.

* Stephen Poyntz to lord Townshend, Stockholm, May 14, 1725. Walpole Papers.

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Alarming re-
ports.

In consequence of these resolutions, Spain and the Emperor made overtures to Catherine, which were cordially received. Large sums of money were remitted from Madrid to Petersburg, and plans of offensive operation were concerted between them. It was reported that the fleet and troops of Russia were preparing to act, not only against Denmark, but to join Spain and the Emperor in their designs in favour of the Pretender. But none of these transactions had any effect in disturbing the public tranquillity, or exciting the attention of parliament.

Application
to parlia-
ment.

As the embarrassed situation of foreign affairs, and the prospect of an approaching rupture with the Emperor, Spain, and Russia, might render it highly necessary to expend large sums in secret service money; as there was no sum appropriated to such emergencies, and as the revenues of the civil list, loaded as they were with a large debt, were incapable of affording a competent supply, the minister was again laid under the necessity of applying to parliament.

On the 8th of April, a message from the king was delivered to the house, importing that he had been engaged in some extraordinary expences, which he was persuaded his loyal commons would believe to have been employed, not only for the honour and dignity of the crown, but for the interest and prosperity of his people. The report of the treasury stated the debt at £.508,363. In the debate, it was asserted that since the civil list was settled, an expence of above £.90,000 a year had been incurred, which could not be foreseen, and consequently not provided for. Parliamentary relief having been given in a similar case three years before, just and abundant matter was suggested for parliamentary debates and popular complaints. Pulteney was particularly urgent, and commenced on this occasion his public opposition. A compliance with the message however was carried by a large majority*.

* For its being taken into consideration by a committee of the whole house on the 9th, 239 against 119; and for passing the bill on the 16th, by 211 against 99. Journals.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

1725.

Conclusion and Object of the Treaty of Hanover.—Objections of Walpole.—Removed.—Observations on the secret Articles in the Treaty of Vienna.

SUCH was the situation of affairs in the north and south, when the king arrived at Hanover, on the 25th of June. The whole political horizon was thickly covered with clouds, which seemed to announce a future tempest. To disperse these clouds, and to bring back serenity, seemed almost beyond the power of human prudence.

Negotiations
at Hanover.

Hanover, as the Hague in the time of William, now became the great centre of intrigue and negotiation, and the cabinet of a British sovereign in the heart of Germany, pacified or convulsed Europe. The great object of Townshend's negotiations, was to add vigour to the co-operation of France, to gain Prussia, to detach Sweden from Russia, and to form with France, and by her concurrence in the north, a counter treaty to that of Vienna, which might awe the Emperor and Spain, and prevent the princes and circles of the German empire, from acceding to an alliance, which solely regarded the house of Austria, and was wholly unconnected with the interests of Germany. All these points were effected with consummate address. Horace Walpole obtained at Paris the concurrence of France, however averse to adopt vigorous measures. Townshend, in a conference at Herenhausen, lured Frederick William, by an offer of guarantying his succession to Berg and Juliers, and detached him from Russia and Austria. Poyntz, aided by French and English money, supported the cause of the king of Sweden, depressed the Russian party, and acquired a majority in the senate favourable to the English interest.

In the midst of these auspicious circumstances, a defensive alliance between England, France, and Prussia, was signed on the 3d of September at Hanover, from which it is usually denominated the treaty of Hanover. By the third article, the contracting parties mutually stipulated to furnish, in case of an attack, two months after requisition, England and France respectively 8,000 foot and 4,000 horse, and Prussia 3,000 foot and 2,000 horse,

Treaty of
Hanover.

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Its objects.

horse, or the value in ships or money. If these quotas were not sufficient, they were to agree concerning farther succours; and, in case of necessity, to assist the party attacked with all their forces.

The treaty of Hanover, like most defensive alliances, had two meanings. The ostensible purport was to guarantee each other's dominions, and the treaties of Westphalia and Oliva. The real purport was to form a strong alliance in opposition to the designs of the Emperor, Spain, and Russia, and, under the general tenor of guaranteeing the privileges of commerce in particular, which the contracting parties actually enjoyed or ought to enjoy, as well in as out of Europe, to compel the Emperor to relinquish his favourite project of establishing the Ostend company, which was considered by England and Holland as contrary to the articles of the treaty of Westphalia; and to counteract the attempts which the Emperor, Spain, and Russia were accused of carrying on in favour of the Pretender.

Approved by
the cabinet.

A copy of the treaty being immediately transmitted by lord Townshend to the duke of Newcastle, was first communicated confidentially to Sir Robert Walpole; and by his advice laid before a select meeting of those * members of the regency, who were most entrusted with the secrets of the cabinet. The result † of the conference was, an unanimous approbation of the contents, and a resolution to support the engagements contracted by this alliance. The lords justices in like manner gave their consent; and immediate negotiations were set on foot to obtain the accession of the United Provinces, Sweden, and Denmark, and several of the German princes and states, which was afterwards effected.

Townshend's
projects:

The resentment entertained at Hanover against the Emperor, is sufficiently proved by a visionary scheme, which the sanguine disposition of Townshend had conceived for the conquest and partition of the Austrian Netherlands, and which he fully enters into and justifies, in a confidential letter ‡ to Horace Walpole. He was moreover so fully assured of its success, that at one time he proposed to divide the conquered provinces between England, France, and Holland; and at another, to transfer them to the elector of Bavaria §. It is most probable that this wild scheme, the im-

* The lord chancellor King, the earl of Berkley, first lord of the admiralty, and earl Godolphin, who was mentioned by the duke of Newcastle as the only person, in the absence of the duke of Devonshire, to whom it was thought proper to entrust a matter of so great secrecy and importance.

† Duke of Newcastle to lord Townshend, September 17, 1725. Correspondence.

‡ Lord Townshend to Horace Walpole, Hanover, August 27, 1725. Walpole Papers.

§ Lord Townshend to W. Finch, 17 November 1725. Walpole Papers.

practicability

practicability of which was proved by Horace Walpole in his reply *, was never communicated to Walpole, but if communicated, we may be fully convinced that it met with no encouragement from a minister whose great principle it was to avoid as much as possible all foreign entanglements, and not to enter into any war which was not connected with the security of England.

Townshend announced, with great triumph, the success which attended his complicated negotiations, by the conclusion of the treaty of Hanover. In a dispatch to Horace Walpole, dated September 3, 1725, he observes, "I must now congratulate with you on our having so successfully begun a work, which, if cultivated and improved as it may be, will check the ambitious views of the court of Vienna, and secure the tranquillity of Europe; and in order to obtain that great end, no time ought to be lost to engage other powers to accede to this treaty."

And exultation.

It has been usually asserted, and echoed from one publication to another, that during the reigns of the two first sovereigns of the house of Brunswick, the helm of government was uniformly steered by the Hanoverian rudder, and that the interests of Great Britain were *wholly* sacrificed to the interests of the king's dominions in Germany. But no transaction has been more vehemently arraigned as a dereliction of national honour, than this treaty, upon which lord Chesterfield has said †, "that Hanover rode triumphant on the shoulders of England;" and lord Chatham, in his energetic language, observed, that "it was a treaty, the tendency of which is discovered in the name; a treaty by which we disunited ourselves from Austria, destroyed that building which we now may perhaps endeavour without success to raise again, and weakened the only power which it was our interest to strengthen." It may, perhaps, seem presumptuous to affirm, in opposition to these respectable opinions, that there was no event since the accession of the house of Brunswick, in which the interests of Hanover were more sacrificed to those of England, than in this very treaty, which then raised such an outcry against the Walpole administration, and which still affords a theme for political obloquy.

Imputation of Hanoverian influence:

In the first place it may be observed, that if in this treaty the interests of England were wholly sacrificed to those of Hanover, evident proofs of that fact would be traced from the conduct of the king and his German ministers. We

* September 4, 1725. Walpole Papers.

† Further Vindication of the case of the Hanover Treaty.

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1720 to 1727.
Refuted.

should find them uniformly promoting that alliance, uniformly concurring in vigorous measures against the house of Austria; but the contrary is the fact. The king himself opposed the Hanover treaty, and objected to all vigorous proceedings against the Emperor, from a dread of being put under the ban of the empire *, and from a tender concern for his electorate, which was threatened with an immediate invasion; nor was he induced to sanction the measures of the British cabinet, until he was persuaded that, even should a rupture with the Emperor ensue, his German dominions would not be exposed to an attack, because it would only be a naval war, and hostilities would be principally confined to the West Indies †; and that in all events, supported by the united arms of France and England, he would have no cause of apprehension ‡.

The treaty was highly displeasing to the German ministers, who, alarmed at the repeated menaces of the Imperial court, loudly exclaimed, that the king was exposing his Hanoverian dominions to the vengeance of the head of the empire, for the sake only of a few branches of the English trade. They accordingly renewed their efforts against Townshend and Walpole, leagued with opposition, and caballed with those foreign powers who were inimical to the English cabinet.

We now find the Emperor, with whom the Hanoverians are said to have been constantly at variance during the whole reign of George the First, courting that very party; we see his confidential ministers expressing hopes of their assistance to counteract the hostile intentions of the English cabinet; lamenting, in most pathetic terms, the overthrow of that influence, which is held forth as unfavourable to the Imperial interest, and caballing with Bothmar, and Fabricius, the king's chambellan; we trace the empress of Germany corresponding with the duchess of Kendal, for the purpose of infusing pacific sentiments into the king.

Another motive, which had certainly no connection with Hanoverian politics, and was solely derived from a due consideration of England alone, is thus detailed in the report of the treaty of Vienna: "The Emperor has long been desirous to have a naval force, and though his endeavours in Italy have hitherto proved fruitless, because nothing can produce navigation but trade, yet should the Ostend company go on with success, by the natural course of things, the Emperor will in time have a

* Intercepted Letters. Correspondence, Period III.

† Palm to the Emperor, December 17th, 1726.

‡ Townshend's Dispatches to Horace Walpole, November 1725, and August 1726.

naval force on the coast of Flanders, which may prove much more inconvenient to us hereafter, than a fleet in the Mediterranean or Adriatic seas; and there are many reasons why we should be extremely jealous of the increase of shipping in the hands of a popish prince. The command of the seas has frequently past from one nation to another; and though Great Britain has continued longer in possession of the superiority than perhaps any other nation ever did, yet all human affairs are subject to great vicissitudes. We have seen one considerable maritime power established in the north in our memory; Spain likewise was in a fair way to make a figure at sea not long ago, and perhaps may do so still; but the protestant interest at sea is declining. The Dane and the Swede are no longer considerable in the Baltic, and there is reason to apprehend, that the Dutch naval force is not at present upon a very good foot *."

Chapter 28.

1725.

Thus then, I have endeavoured to shew that this treaty was not directed by the interests of Hanover, but diametrically opposed them; that it was wholly an English treaty in every thing, but the name; and that the motive which gave rise to it, was the protection and preservation of British commerce, British possessions, and British government. Its determinate objects were, the preservation of Gibraltar, the abolition of the Ostend company, and, if credit may be given to the supposed secret articles in the treaty of Vienna, the frustration of the plan for restoring the Pretender.

Treaty of
Hanover, a
British treaty.

In thus attempting to explain the motives which led to the formation of the treaty of Hanover, I am not justifying Sir Robert Walpole, for he never entirely approved that alliance; he always thought that the king and Townshend were too much alarmed with the exaggerated rumours and apprehensions of distant evils; he was of opinion, that milder measures might have been pursued with greater probability of success. He strongly objected to one part of their proceedings; that while they were anxious to gain allies on the side of Germany, they neglected to secure Portugal, the advantages of whose friendship, in case of a rupture with Spain, were incalculably great; and he did not hesitate to deliver his opinion, however contrary to the sentiments of the king, and his brother-in-law, with that frankness to which he was always accustomed. He remonstrated, in the strongest manner, against the large sums of money required for gaining Sweden; and when lord Townshend, in the name of the king, demanded £. 100,000 for that purpose, he ventured to declare that it was so large a demand, as could not be legally supplied by any other method than from the civil list; and that £. 50,000

Walpole's
objections.

* Report concerning the Treaty of Vienna. Orford Papers.

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was as much as that could furnish, without the greatest difficulties, and trusted that no more would be drawn for. He thought Townshend too precipitate in concluding the treaty; hinted his doubts whether the empress of Russia had any serious intention to invade England, and strongly opposed the searching or laying an embargo on the Russian ships, which Townshend suspected were employed in conveying arms and ammunition to the disaffected in Scotland or Ireland.

He was also dissatisfied with lord Townshend for having concealed the negotiation which terminated in the treaty of Hanover, until it was entirely concluded. He doubted the sincerity of France, and suspected (what really happened) that she would evade paying her share of the subsidies, and that therefore the principal burthen of the expence would fall on England. He was averse to enter upon measures which might tend to diminish the force of the house of Austria, whom he had always considered as the natural ally of England, and the bulwark against the ambitious designs of France, whenever an union with Spain should be re-established, and their finances be recovered from the exhausted state to which they had been reduced by the war of the Spanish succession, and the fatal effects of the Mississippi scheme.

Motives for
supporting it.

He declared, in the most positive terms, that if a war was to be undertaken, which he most heartily deprecated, it was absolutely necessary to convince the nation, that an invasion by a foreign power, or an evident design of an invasion, the support of the Pretender, and the cause of the Protestant succession, were the principal motives that compelled the king to part with that peace and tranquillity which had been attended with such lasting and happy effects. But from the moment that there appeared to him any danger of an invasion in favour of the Pretender, however remote and distant, he caught the alarm. He became not less anxious than his brother minister to adopt measures of defence, and to prepare for hostilities; yet he continued so true to his system, that, during the complicated negotiations which followed the treaty of Hanover, he inveighed against precipitate measures, and invariably recommended caution and forbearance. He was, in fact, so very anxious to prevent a rupture with the Emperor, that he availed himself of the pacific sentiments of the duchess of Kendal*, to counteract, by her influence over the king, the more violent and hostile resolutions of Townshend, who supported the necessity of vigorous measures.

Secret articles
of the treaty
of Vienna
discussed.

It was observed by the late earl of Hardwicke†, that the merits of the treaty of Hanover, entirely rest on the still undetermined points, whether

* Correspondence,

† Hardwicke Papers.

the courts of Vienna and Madrid intended only to compose their own quarrels, or also to take Gibraltar, and to impose the Pretender on England. As these yet undecided points still exercise the sagacity, and give full scope to the conjectures of native and foreign historians, I shall here observe, that the papers and documents submitted to my inspection, fully display the proofs on which the reality of the secret articles was formed, and which produced the public declarations of the king and ministers in parliament, that the Emperor and king of Spain proposed to attempt the recovery of Gibraltar, and the restoration of the Pretender. From a candid review and comparison of these accounts, we may draw this inference, that the king of Spain, urged by resentment, ambition, and interest, was serious in his resolution to extort the cession of Gibraltar and Minorca, at all events; was prepared to employ his whole force against England to restore the Pretender; and that he fully depended on the co-operation of the Emperor, to whom he sent, in fourteen months, 1,340,000 pistoles; and would have remitted more, had the galleons arrived. To these facts, may be added the frequent conferences of Ormond and Liria, son of the duke of Berwick, with the Spanish, Imperial, and Russian ministers; the plan of an invasion given in by Liria; the assembling of troops on the coast of Galicia; the engagement of officers for the Pretender's service; the redemption of the stands of arms which the Pretender had pawned at Cadiz; the distinguished reception of the duke of Wharton, as agent of the Pretender, with the ensigns of the garter, by him recently conferred; and his mission to Vienna for the purpose of concerting a plan of operation. At this crisis, the British ambassador was treated with slight and indignity; he was, to use his own expression, avoided by the grandees like a pestilence. The Jacobite air, "The king shall enjoy his own again," was insultingly played at court, and the duke of Liria did not scruple to declare, that he hoped it would soon be a crime in Spain to mention George the First as king of England*.

But a distinction has been made between the king of Spain and the Emperor, on whose behalf it has been asserted, that some reports were afterwards found to have been exaggerated, and some imputed projects never intended to be carried into execution. The Emperor himself positively denied that he had ever entertained serious designs of assisting the Pretender, and declared that he had only lured the queen of Spain with the hopes of giving his daughters in marriage to her two sons, which he never meant to realize. Yet at the time there were strong reasons to believe that he encouraged the Pretender and his agents.

* M. Stanhope's dispatches from Spain, 1725. Harrington and Walpole Papers. See Correspondence, Article Ripperda.

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1720 to 1727.

The Emperor's great object was to establish the Ostend company, and to obtain the guarantee of the pragmatic sanction, which England and France declined, and with that view, to force George the First to a compliance, by affecting to co-operate with Spain in favour of the Pretender, and by threatening an invasion of the electorate of Hanover. Yet there were sufficient appearances to justify the apprehensions of the king, and to induce him to believe that the Emperor was sincere in his designs of joining Spain with all his forces, and that he would only be deterred by a counter-alliance. Ripperda said publicly, that by this close union of Spain and Austria, the two sovereigns would avenge the insults they had received; and the partisans of the Emperor boasted, that as he was no longer alarmed for Italy, there was no power in the empire who could venture to oppose the dictates of their master in matters of religion or otherwise *. The Austrian minister publicly boasted, that the Emperor would give laws to Europe; that he would now possess the sole and entire direction of the court of Spain, and that in future the king must be obliged to him for the continuance of the harmony between England and Spain, and for the security of the commercial advantages stipulated with that crown †. Count Sinzendorf also said to Petkum, "Let the king take care of himself, for we know that the people of England are beginning to be tired of him." The Emperor was weak enough to make an unconstitutional distinction between the king and parliament, and boasted to count Oropossa, that by offering to the parliament the exclusive commerce to Spain and the Indies, he should not only obtain the restitution of Gibraltar, but seduce England from France. "My ministers," he added, "are unanimous; I am desirous to favour the people and commerce of England; but Gibraltar and Minorca must first be restored ‡." As the Emperor was at this time known to govern the councils of the court of Madrid, and the strictest union appeared to be maintained between them, it was not possible for ministers to distinguish between his professions and intentions; nor does a subsequent avowal of duplicity on his part, inculcate those who, acting under the impulse of opinions so well founded, formed that treaty which deterred the king of Spain and his allies from exerting themselves in the execution of those projects, which, if once accompanied with success, might have been pursued to an extent not originally intended by the Emperor. Such were the grounds of alarm which induced Walpole, though not to approve the proceedings in all respects, yet to justify and to support the treaty in parliament.

* St. Saphorin to lord Townshend, Vienna, 11th May 1725.

† Duke of Newcastle to Mr. Stanhope, May 4th, 1725, O. S.

‡ St. Saphorin to lord Townshend, Vienna, May 30th, 1725.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH:

1725—1727.

The King's dangerous Passage to England.—The Treaty of Hanover approved by Parliament, and vigorous Measures adopted.—Public Indignation against the Emperor.—Walpole's pacific Views.—Preliminaries agreed to by the Emperor—and Spain.—The King departs for Hanover.

THE presence of the king being now necessary in England, for the purpose of laying the treaty before parliament, he quitted Hanover on the 29th of December, and after a short stay in Holland, embarked at Helvoetsluys, on the 1st of January, O. S. at one in the afternoon; and after a violent storm, which continued three days, during which he was exposed to imminent danger, he landed on the 3d at Rye. To the king's escape, the author of the Night Thoughts alludes in his seventh Satire, which concludes with a high eulogium on Sir Robert Walpole.

The king's dangerous passage to England.

While sea and air, great Brunswick! shook our state,
And sported with our king's and kingdom's fate,
Depriv'd of what she lov'd, and press'd by fear
Of ever losing what she held most dear;
How did Britannia, like Achilles weep,
And tell her sorrows to the kindred deep!
Hang o'er the floods, and, in devotion warm,
Strive, for thee, with the surge, and fight the storm!
What felt thy Walpole, pilot of the realm!
Our Palinurus slept not at the helm.
His eyes ne'er closed, long since enured to wake,
And outwatch every star for Brunswick's sake:
By thwarting passions toft, by cares oppress'd,
He found the tempest pictur'd in his breast.
But now, what joys that gloom of heart dispel,
No powers of language—but his own can tell;
His own, which nature and the graces form,
At will to raise or hush the civil storm.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.
January 20th
1726.
Speech from
the throne.

The speech from the throne was penned with great address, and well calculated to produce an impressive effect. It stated, that the distressed condition of the protestants abroad, the engagements contracted by certain powers, which seemed to lay the foundation of new disturbances in Europe, and to threaten his subjects with the loss of their most advantageous trade, had obliged the king to conclude a defensive alliance with France and Prussia, and to invite the States General and other powers to accede, with a view to secure their rights and privileges, and preserve the peace and balance of Europe. It adverted to the machinations of the dissaffected party, in favour of the Pretender; and after urging the necessity of placing the kingdom in a posture of defence, concluded in the true spirit of the preventive and pacific system adopted by the minister. "When the world shall see; that you will not suffer the British crown and nation to be menaced and insulted, those, who most envy the present happiness and tranquillity of this kingdom, and are endeavouring to make us subservient to their ambition, will consider their own interest and circumstances, before they make any attempt upon so brave a people, strengthened and supported by prudent and powerful alliances; and, though desirous to preserve the peace, able and ready to defend themselves against the efforts of all aggressors. Such resolutions, and such measures, timely taken, I am satisfied, are the most effectual means of preventing a war, and continuing to us the blessings of peace and prosperity *."

Pulteney in
opposition.

January 28th.
February 9th.

Addresses, in conformity with the speech, were presented by both houses, to support the king against all attempts to disturb the public repose: And the commons immediately proceeded to consider of a supply. On the proposal for continuing the same number of men as were maintained in the last year, a motion of Shippen, to reduce the 4,000 men, was negatived without a division, and the original question carried. Another being made by Pulteney, for a committee to state the public debts, from 1714 to 1725, Walpole objected to it as unseasonable and preposterous, and calculated to give a dangerous wound to public credit, when the monied men were too much alarmed with the appearances of an approaching war; and urged, that in the present posture of affairs, the commons could not better express their love to their country, than by fulfilling their promises, and raising the necessary supplies, for the purpose of enabling the king to make good his late engagements,

* Journals. Chandler. Tindal.

disappointing

disappointing the hopes of the disaffected, and resenting any insults which might be offered to his crown and dignity. Barnard, member for London, having confirmed the statement of the minister, and observed that stocks had already fallen 12 or 14 per cent.; his remarks made a deep impression on the house; and the motion was negatived by 262 against 89.

Chapter 29.
1725 to 1727.

The treaty of Hanover was presented to the house of commons by Sir Robert Walpole, but he did not take any active part on that occasion. The business of the day was principally supported by his brother Horace Walpole, who opened the debate with a very able speech, in which he gave a detail of the state of affairs in Europe, from the peace of Utrecht to that time; dwelt on the dangerous consequences which might result from the union of Spain and the Emperor, and endeavoured to prove the necessity of the treaty formed at Hanover, between England, France, and Prussia, as being the only method of counteracting the ambitious designs of those two sovereigns, preserving the tranquillity of Europe, restoring the balance of power, and securing the trade and commerce of England.

Treaty of
Hanover
approved.
Feb. 16th,
1725-6.

The opposition, with great art, condemned the treaty, as being made solely with a view to Hanover, and as likely to engage the nation in a war for the defence of the king's dominions in Germany, contrary to the article in the act for limiting the crown in the protestant line, which being the basis of the act of settlement, was become part of the constitution, and therefore ought to be held sacred and inviolable. The objection was well answered by Henry Pelham, "That the true meaning and intent of that limitation, was not wholly and for ever to deprive his majesty's foreign dominions of any assistance from this nation; for if so, the king in that respect would be in a worse condition upon his accession to the British throne, than he was before; but only to restrain the sovereign for the future, from engaging the nation, at his pleasure, in a war for the defence of any dominions not belonging to the crown of England, without the consent of parliament, to whom the legislature wisely left to judge and determine, whether such a war was just and necessary or no? That for his own part, he was fully of opinion, that if in the present juncture, his foreign dominions should be attacked or insulted, this nation ought to support the king against all his enemies *."

The only share Walpole took in this debate, was in reply to Pulteney, who spoke against the motion, and suggested that the backwardness of the Em-

* Chandler, vol. 6. p. 362.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

peror in granting the investiture of Bremen and Verden might have been one motive for the late measures; observed, "that the king might long ago have received the investiture, if he would have consented to pay the exorbitant fees demanded on that occasion." An address, moved by Pelham, was carried in the affirmative, by 285 against 107; and the same triumphant majority voted an extraordinary supply, an increase of seamen, and testified their hearty concurrence to support government in the most vigorous measures.

Prorogation
of Parlia-
ment.

This session, in which scarcely any opposition was made to the measures of government, was closed on the 24th of May by prorogation; when the king, after returning his hearty thanks for their attention and zeal, and extolling their spirit and resolution, concluded, "The constant employment of my thoughts, and the most earnest wishes of my heart, tend wholly to the securing to my subjects their just rights and advantages, and to the preserving to them and to all Europe, the enjoyment of a safe and honourable peace: and I must not conclude without giving you the strongest assurances, that the particular confidence you have placed in me, shall be made use of in such a manner only, as may most effectually conduce to the attaining those good and great purposes *."

Vigorous
preparations.

In consequence of this effusion of parliamentary zeal, the most active preparations for commencing or preventing hostilities were made, in concert with France. The first efforts were directed to the North, as to the point which appeared most dangerous and alarming. For it required no great penetration to foresee, that if Russia could either bribe or awe Sweden into compliance, Denmark would not be able to resist the combination of these two powers. A Russian squadron riding in the port of Gotheburg, in conjunction with the Swedish fleet, would keep Great Britain in continual alarms, by threatening her with an immediate invasion, and be ready to co-operate with the Emperor and Spain. The golden showers poured into Sweden from France and England, overcame the Holstein and Russian party, and Sweden prepared, on the first appearance of the English squadron, to renounce the alliance with Russia, and to receive the Hanoverian allies with open arms. The squadron sent to the Baltic under the command of Sir Charles Wager, effected the purposes for which it was equipped: it inspired Denmark with confidence; enabled Sweden to recede from its alliance with Russia, and to accede to the treaty of Hanover; it com-

pelled the empress Catherine to renounce her hostile attempts in favour of the duke of Holstein; and though she afterwards concluded a formal alliance with the Emperor, yet it was not attended with any material effects. Threatened with an attack from the united arms of France, England, Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, who had acceded to the treaty of Hanover, and finding herself not likely to receive any effectual assistance from her ally the Emperor, who, though he had seduced Prussia from the Hanover allies, had been foiled in his attempts to gain the princes and circles of the empire, her impotent resentment subsided at the near approach of danger, and her fleet quietly remained in her ports, without venturing to oppose the British squadron.

These vigorous measures in the North, which detached Sweden from Russia, and prevented all concert between the Emperor and Catherine, effected the most difficult part of the business, and were a prelude to the successful issue of the exertions against Spain and the Emperor. The haughty and restless ambition of Spain had roused up the spirit of the British nation, but strong prejudices in favour of the house of Austria prevailed in England. The Emperor had many partizans, and even Walpole was inclined not to push matters vigorously against him, but the imprudence of the Emperor destroyed these favourable impressions.

This year gave birth to two events of great importance, which occurred nearly at the same period, the fall of Ripperda, and the disgrace of the duke of Bourbon. The fall of Ripperda, of which a full account is given in a subsequent chapter, was unfavourable to the interests of England. On his disgrace, he took refuge in the house of the British ambassador, where he was arrested by command of the king of Spain. Stanhope complained of the violation of the law of nations, and was warmly supported by the foreign ministers. The Spanish cabinet tendered excuses; memorials and counter memorials passed between the two courts; the misunderstanding was increased, and Philip made vast preparations by sea and land, which were evidently designed for the siege of Gibraltar *.

The disgrace of the duke of Bourbon was received at the courts of Madrid and Vienna with the highest transports of joy, as a sure prelude to the separation of France from England, and reconciliation with Spain. The elevation of Fleury was hailed by the Jacobites as the beginning of a new æra, and the certain forerunner of a successful attempt to place the Pretender on the throne, by the united arms of France, Spain, and Austria; but the address of Horace Walpole, who had secured his confidence, prevailed

Fall of Rip-
perda.

June.
Disgrace of
the Duke of
Bourbon.

* Stanhope's dispatches.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Meeting of
parliament.

on the new minister to maintain the union, and to ratify the engagements specified in the treaty of Hanover. While the opposition in England industriously circulated reports, that the cabinet was duped by Fleury, the French party hostile to his measures, and the queen of Spain, declared that Fleury was a coward, and wholly governed by that heretic Horace Walpole *.

The parliament assembled the 17th of January 1727, and the king in his speech from the throne observed, that he had received information from different parts, on which he could entirely depend, that the placing the Pretender upon the throne of this kingdom was one of the articles of the secret engagements; and if time should evince, that the giving up the trade of this nation to one power, and Gibraltar and Port Mahon to another, is made the price and reward of imposing upon this kingdom a Popish Pretender, what indignation must this raise in the breast of every protestant Briton †! This whole speech is singularly full and explicit, and in length exceeds all others, which, since the revolution, had been delivered from the throne. The conclusion peculiarly animated and impressive: "If preserving a due balance of power in Europe; if defending the possessions of the crown of Great Britain, of infinite advantage and security to our trade and commerce; if supporting that trade and commerce against dangerous and unlawful encroachments; and if the present establishment, the religion, liberties, and properties of a protestant people, are any longer considerations worthy of the care and attention of a British parliament; I need say no more to incite my loyal and faithful houses of parliament to exert themselves in the defence of all that is dear and valuable to them."

Zeal of parliament.

Indignation
of the public.

The zeal and indignation raised by this speech was so great, that the address of thanks was carried by a majority of 251 against 81; and the commons proved, that the warm terms in which they conveyed their approbation of the measures which had been pursued, were not confined to mere form. Twenty thousand seamen were unanimously voted; the army was augmented to 26,000 men, and the supplies demanded for the service of the current year, were voted without the least opposition. The public indignation, excited by the peremptory demand of the restitution of Gibraltar, and the secret articles in the treaty of Vienna, which, according to the positive declarations of the king and his ministers, related to the Pretender, was still farther increased by the imprudent conduct of Palm, the Imperial minister at London. Caballing with the Hanoverian ministers, and confiding in the

* Horace Walpole's Apology. Walpole Papers.

† Tindal, vol. 19. p. 562. Journals.

counsels of opposition, he advised the Emperor, in a letter which fell into the hands of the ministers, to make a public declaration, that the assertions contained in the speech were false *.

Guided by this imprudent advice, the Emperor, who was wholly unacquainted with the principles of the English constitution, ordered Palm to present a memorial to the king. In this memorial, the Imperial minister, after reflecting on the speech, and after denying, in his master's name, in the most solemn manner, the existence of any secret articles, concluded in these words: "Which things being thus, the injury offered to truth, the honour and dignity of his sacred Imperial and Catholic majesty require, that they should be exposed to your majesty, to the kingdom of Great Britain, and to the whole world: and his sacred Imperial majesty demands that reparation which is due to him by all manner of right, for the great injuries which have been done him by these many imputations †."

This memorial was printed and circulated, and was accompanied with a letter from the Imperial chancellor, count Zinzendorff, enjoining Palm to publish it, that the whole nation might be acquainted with it ‡. The intemperate language used in these papers, and the indiscretion of distinguishing between the king and his subjects, and of appealing from the throne to the nation, excited the just resentment of parliament. The memorial being submitted to the house of commons, not only those who supported government, but even Pulteney, Sir William Wyndham, Shippen, and the leading members in opposition, agreed in expressing the highest indignation at this affront offered to the crown, and strongly reprobated the audaciousness of the Imperial minister. The whole house unanimously adopted the address drawn up by Walpole, "To express the highest resentment at the affront and indignity offered to his most sacred majesty, by the memorial delivered by Monsieur de Palm, the Emperor's resident, and at his insolence in printing and dispersing the same throughout the kingdom; to declare their utmost abhorrence of this audacious manner of appealing to the people against his majesty; and their detestation of the presumptuous and vain attempt of endeavouring to instil into the minds of any of his majesty's faithful subjects, the least distrust or diffidence in his most sacred royal word; to return his majesty the thanks of this house, for his care and vigilance, in discovering the secret and pernicious designs of his enemies, and his goodness in communicating to his parliament the dangers that threatened this kingdom; and to assure his majesty, that the house would stand by and support him against all open and secret enemies, both at home and abroad; and

Chapter 29.

1725 to 1727.

Imprudence
of the Em-
peror.

Unanimous
address to the
king.
March 13th.

* Correspondence.

† Tindal, vol. 19. p. 576.

‡ Hist. Register.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Imperial minister dismissed.

Pacific views of Walpole.

effectually defeat the expectations of all such as may have in any manner countenanced, encouraged, or abetted the disturbers of the public tranquillity in this extravagant insult upon his majesty, or flattered them with hopes, that an obstinate perseverance in their destructive measures, could stagger the firmness of the British nation, in vindication of his majesty's honour, and the defence of their rights and privileges *."

Soon after the presentation of this address, Palm was commanded to leave the kingdom; the British resident at Vienna quitted the Imperial dominions; and as the Spanish minister had previously taken an abrupt departure, a rupture with Spain and the Emperor appeared to be unavoidable. The most active preparations were made on all sides; Spain commenced hostilities by the siege of Gibraltar, and expected to be seconded by the whole force of the house of Austria. A bloody war would have been the consequence of this attack, had the Emperor fulfilled the treaty of Vienna; or had England and France instantly directed their whole force against the restless and ambitious court of Madrid. Fortunately, the pacific sentiments of Walpole and Fleury began to operate on the affairs of Europe, and the government of England exhibited a striking instance of vigour and moderation; of vigour in the preparations for war, and of moderation in suspending the blow, at the very moment in which it was ready to strike with effect.

Walpole dreaded the interruption of our commerce with Spain, which at that time formed the most extensive branches of the national trade, and with that view strained every nerve to infuse sentiments of reconciliation into the British cabinet. Hence the instructions † of admiral Hosier, who had been sent on an expedition to the Spanish West Indies, enjoined him in the strongest manner not to commit hostilities; hence England also declined the offer of France, to consider the attack of Gibraltar as a *casus fœderis*, from an apprehension lest the warlike interposition of France should contribute to the diffusion of hostilities; hence, notwithstanding the insult offered to the king and nation by the Emperor, through the medium of his minister, overtures of accommodation were gladly received through the mediation of France.

When the Emperor so grossly insulted the king and the nation by the memorial of Palm, he conceived the most sanguine expectations of having formed a confederacy strong enough to oppose the allies of Hanover. He had seduced the king of Prussia from the treaty of Hanover; he had already gained the electors of Mentz, Treves, Cologne, and Palatine; secured the neutrality of the Saxons, and even prevailed on the duke of Brunswick Wol-

* Journals. Chandler.

† Walpole Papers.

fenbottle, to admit an Austrian garrison into Brunswic, from whence he might easily make an irruption into Hanover. He had concluded a strict alliance with the Czarina, and collected an army of 30,000 men, ready to march from the Netherlands to the invasion of Holland.

Chapter 29.

1725 to 1727.

But the measures adopted in opposition to these hostile designs, disconcerted his views; 20,000 Danes, and 12,000 Swedes, were subsidised by England and France; 12,000 Hessians taken into English pay; and a French army was collecting on the frontiers of Germany. The death of the Czarina, in May, deprived the Emperor of a powerful ally; the king of Prussia began to waver; the princes and circles of Germany refused to consider the cause of the house of Austria as the cause of the empire; and as the king of Spain was unable to supply him with those large sums of money, which the unbounded promises of Ripperda had led him to expect, Charles found himself unable to resist the powerful combination against him. He sacrificed Spain to his own safety; and after a short negotiation commenced by the Pope, and continued through the mediation of France, he signed at Paris, on the 31st of May, in his own name, and in that of Spain, the preliminaries of peace with England, France, and Holland. He agreed to suspend the charter of the Ostend company for seven years; confirmed all the treaties in force anterior to 1725, and consented to submit to a general congress the termination of the disputes subsisting between the allies of Hanover and Vienna.

Separate
peace with
the Emperor.

1727.

Dismissed in
May 1726.

Philip the Fifth having, in consequence of his disagreement with France, no minister at Paris, the preliminaries were signed at Vienna in the beginning of June, by the duke of Bournonville, the Spanish ambassador; the fifth article declaring that they should be executed immediately after the signature by the Emperor and the allies, and by Spain eight days after the king of Spain had received them signed. In consequence of this agreement, George the First issued orders to lord Portmore, governor of Gibraltar, and his admirals, both on the coasts of Spain, and in the West Indies, to cease all hostilities, and to restore all prizes taken from Spain; to permit the return of the galleons to Europe, and to raise the blockade of Porto Bello, and the other ports in the West Indies. In return, it was expected that the siege of Gibraltar would be raised, and the prizes taken from England, particularly the prince Frederick, belonging to the South Sea company, at Vera Cruz, would be restored.

Spain forced
to accede.

On proroguing the parliament, the king observed, in his speech from the throne, in a language which breathed the pacific sentiments of Walpole, "The siege of Gibraltar proves, beyond all dispute, the aim and design

May 15.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

The king's
departure for
Hanover.

design of the engagements entered into by the Emperor and the king of Spain; but the preparations I had made for the defence of that place, and the bravery of my troops, will, I doubt not, convince them of the rashness and folly of that undertaking. However the love of peace has hitherto prevailed on me, even under this high provocation, to suspend, in some measure, my resentments; and instead of having immediate recourse to arms, and demanding of my allies that assistance, which they are engaged and ready to give me, I have concurred with the most Christian king, and the States General, in making such overtures of accommodation, as must convince all the world of the uprightness of our intentions, and of our sincere disposition to peace; and demonstrate, to whose ambition and thirst of power the calamities of a war are to be imputed, if these just and reasonable propositions are rejected. In the mean time, I have the pleasure to acquaint you, that the crown of Sweden has acceded to the treaty of Hanover, and the convention between me, his most Christian majesty, and the king of Denmark, is actually signed *." Such was the state of the negotiation, when the king departed for Hanover, in June 1727.

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH:

1727.

Cabals of the Duchess of Kendal and Bolingbroke to remove Walpole.—Bolingbroke's Interview with the King.—Sanguine Hopes of Opposition.—Death of the King.—Memoirs of his Wife, the unfortunate Sophia of Zell.

Cabals
against Wal-
pole,

AT this period, Walpole stood in the highest estimation with the king and nation; and his pacific sentiments were so well known, that all who desired the blessing of peace, wished for his continuance in office; yet ru-

* Journals. Chandler.

mours

mours of a change in administration were believed and circulated; and a formal attempt was made by Bolingbroke, in co-operation with the duchess of Kendal, to obtain his removal, and to substitute himself in his place. A full account of this intrigue, which has occasioned various conjectures and uncertain speculations, is here given from undoubted authorities.

Chapter 30.

1727.

The duchess of Kendal, who, by the death of lady Darlington, remained without a rival in the confidence of the king, had, in consideration of £. 11,000, assured lord Bolingbroke that she would obtain his complete restoration*; but having failed in effecting her promise, she threw the whole blame on Sir Robert Walpole, as the person who obstructed the king's designs in his favour; and though she was inclined to second all attempts for the purpose of obtaining his disgrace, yet many circumstances prevented her from exerting her influence in favour of Bolingbroke.

By the duchess
of Kendal
and Boling-
broke.

She was become timid and cautious; fearful of distressing the mind of the king, who was declining in years and health, and easily depressed. She was unwilling to offend the ministers, who, besides the payment of a pension of £. 7,500 from the exchequer, which it depended on their punctuality to discharge, secured her good-will by private presents, and supplied her with various means of gratifying her rapaciousness. She affected great concern for the interest of England, and sacrificed to her own tranquillity the concerns of the Hanoverian junto. Under these circumstances, it was no easy task to rouse her active exertions; but Bolingbroke paid assiduous court; his wife was no less constant in her attendance, and both anxiously watched for a favourable opportunity, which at length seemed to present itself.

The eldest son of Sir Robert Walpole had been appointed ranger of Richmond Park, and the minister, while a new lodge was building, took a small tenement on Richmond Hill, where the king after shooting, occasionally dined with him, and passed the afternoon drinking punch, of which he was excessively fond, in an easy and convivial manner. The duchess, alarmed at this familiar intercourse, and anxious to render these visits less frequent, attempted, by means of some of her German friends, who were generally of the party, to break up the meeting sooner than the usual time of retiring; but their attempts having no effect, the duchess listened to the overtures of Bolingbroke, who artfully fomented her jealousy against Sir Robert Walpole, and prevailed on her to second his efforts.

The king's
convivial
intercourse
with Wal-
pole.

* Chapter 25.

He

Period III.

1720 to 1727.

Boling-
broke's au-
dience with
the king.

He drew up a long memorial, full of invectives against the minister, which the duchess of Kendal secretly delivered to the king. After stating in various instances the misconduct of administration, he concluded, by requesting an audience, and undertook to demonstrate that the kingdom must inevitably be ruined, should Sir Robert Walpole continue at the head of the treasury. The king put this memorial into the hands of the minister, who concluded, that the person who conveyed it, could not be ignorant of the contents: after some inquiry, he traced it to the duchess of Kendal, who, on being interrogated, acknowledged that she had delivered it, and attempted to justify her conduct by frivolous excuses. Walpole in reply, only entreated her as a favour, to second the instances of Bolingbroke, and to procure for him that audience, which he so earnestly solicited. The duchess, after several endeavours to excuse herself, promised compliance; and at a proper interval, Walpole besought the king to grant an audience to Bolingbroke; and urged the propriety, by observing, that if this request was rejected, much clamour would be raised against him for keeping the king to himself, and for permitting none to approach his person who might tell unwelcome truths.

The king declined complying in so positive a manner, that Walpole could not venture to press it any farther in person; but waited on the duchess to renew his application. He found lady Bolingbroke on a visit, and when she retired, was informed, that the king was unwilling to admit Bolingbroke, on a supposition that it would make him uneasy. Walpole repeated his earnest entreaties, and declared that he could not be easy, until the audience was granted. These pressing solicitations finally had their effect; and Bolingbroke was admitted into the closet.

While Walpole was attending in an adjoining apartment, lord Letchmere came, and demanded admission for the signature of papers, which he had brought as chancellor of the duchy of Cornwall. He was informed that Bolingbroke was with the king, and that Walpole was also waiting. In the midst of his surprise, Bolingbroke coming out, Letchmere instantly rushed into the closet, and without making any apology, or entering upon his own business, burst out into the most violent invectives against Walpole, whom he reviled as not contented with doing mischief himself, but had introduced one who was, if possible, worse than himself, to be his assistant. The king, delighted with this mistake, calmly asked him, if he would undertake the office of prime minister. Letchmere made no reply, but continued pouring forth his invectives, and finally departed without having offered any of the papers to sign. Walpole found the king so highly diverted and occupied with this incident, that it was some time before he had an opportunity of inquiring

inquiring the subject of Bolingbroke's conversation. The king slightly answered, "*Bagatelles, bagatelles.*"

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Thus was this formidable attack defeated by the prudence and firmness of the minister; the king continued his confidential visits, and on his departure for Hanover, ordered him to have the lodge in Richmond Park finished against his return.

Produces no effect.

Such is the account of this extraordinary transaction, given by Walpole himself†; yet other reports have been circulated, which deserve consideration. Bolingbroke so confidently and repeatedly asserted, that on the king's return from Hanover, he should be appointed minister, that this opinion obtained belief, not only from his friends and partizans, but from others who were less inimical to the minister, and less desirous of his fall. Swift expresses his hopes on the subject, with his usual freedom, in a letter to Dr. Sheridan, May 13th, 1727; and Atterbury drew up a memorial to cardinal Fleury, in which he treated the fall of the minister as a certain event. Pelham also told speaker Onslow‡, that at this period, Walpole was so convinced of Bolingbroke's intended elevation, as to have adopted the resolution of resigning and accepting a peerage, but was deterred by the remonstrances of the duke of Devonshire, and the representations of the princess of Wales, who dissuaded him from a step, which would incapacitate him for taking his accustomed lead in the house of commons.

Vague rumours on the subject.

On the other hand, Horace Walpole, lady Walsingham, and the duchess of Kendal herself, in a conversation with Sir Matthew Decker, asserted that the king did not intend to dismiss Walpole. It is not difficult, however, to reconcile these contradictory reports. It was natural for Bolingbroke to propagate an opinion tending to exalt his own importance; it is probable that Walpole, in a peevish moment of dissatisfaction, might have expressed a resolution of retiring; and the whole account might possibly have received its greatest authority from Walpole's own declaration, that knowing the venality of the duchess of Kendal, her ascendancy over the king, and the influence of Bolingbroke over her, he was not without apprehensions that her efforts might have finally succeeded.

The king departed for Hanover on the 3d of June; he enjoyed perfect health till he arrived at Delden. He was entertained by the count de Twittel, at a country house about twenty miles from that town. The king

Death of the king.

* From Lord Orford.

† Etough's Minutes of a Conversation with Sir Robert Walpole in September 1727. Correspondence.

‡ Onslow's Remarks. Correspondence, Period IV.

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eat some melons after supper, which probably caused the indigestion of which he died. He returned that evening to Delden, and set out early the next morning, after having breakfasted on a cup of chocolate. On his arrival at Bentheim, the king felt himself indisposed, but continued his journey in opposition to the repeated entreaties of his suite. His indisposition increased, and when he arrived at Ippenburen, he was quite lethargic; his hand fell down as if lifeless, and his tongue hung out of his mouth. He gave, however, signs of life, by continually crying out, as well as he could articulate, Osnabrug, Osnabrug. This impatience to reach Osnabrug, induced the attendants not to stop at Ippenburen, but to hasten on, in hopes of arriving at that city before he died. But it was too late. The exact time and place of his death cannot be ascertained; but it is most probable, that he expired either as the carriage was ascending the hill near Ippenburen, or on the summit. On their arrival at the palace of his brother, the bishop of Osnabrug, he was immediately bled, but all attempts to recover him proved ineffectual*. A courier had been dispatched to the duchess of Kendal, who had remained at Delden, with the account of the king's dangerous situation; he met her on the road, about two miles on the other side of the Rhine; but as she was hastening on, another courier announced his death. She beat her breast, tore her hair, and gave signs of extreme grief; and then, dismissing the English ladies who accompanied her, took the road to Brunswic, where she continued three months †.

Lord Townshend, who was on his journey to Hanover, repaired instantly to Osnabrug, where he arrived on the 22d, early in the morning; but finding the king demised, he wrote a letter ‡ of condolence and congratulation to the new sovereign, and taking post, pursued his journey to England.

Anecdote of
Walpole.

Before I conclude the reign of George the First, one remarkable fact must not be omitted: As the king could not readily speak English, nor Sir Robert Walpole French, the minister was obliged to deliver his sentiments

* For this account of the king's death, I am indebted to my friend Nathaniel Wraxal, esquire, who obtained it from persons at Hanover and Osnabrug, who recollected the event.

† The duchess of Kendal was sister of Frederic Achatius, count of Schulenburg and Hedlen. Petronelle Melesina, the countess of Walsingham, who afterwards married the earl of Chesterfield, was supposed to be her daughter by George the First, though she was

considered as her niece. The duchess returned to England, and died at a very advanced age. She principally resided at Kendal House, near Twickenham, which was after her death converted into a tea garden. Her immense property was divided amongst her German relations, and the countess of Chesterfield.

‡ Sir Cyril Wick to Stephen Poyntz, June 27, 1727. Correspondence. Lord Townshend to the king.

in Latin; and as that was a language in which neither could converse with readiness and propriety, Walpole was frequently heard to say, that during the reign of the first George, he governed the kingdom by means of bad latin *. It is a matter of wonder, that under such disadvantages, the king should take pleasure in transacting business with him, a circumstance which was principally owing to the method and perspicuity of his calculations, and to the extreme facility with which he arranged and explained the most abstruse and difficult combinations of finance.

It has been already observed, that George the First had, by a left-handed marriage, espoused the duchess of Kendal, at the time his real wife, the unfortunate Sophia Dorothy, was still alive. She was the only child of William duke of Zell, by Eleanor d'Emiers, of the house of Olbreuse, in France; was born in 1666, and her hand was courted by the most powerful princes of Germany. His father Ernest Augustus had once designed him for the princess Anne, afterwards queen of England; he actually went to England to pay his addresses, and was well received and approved by the whole court. But he was recalled by his father, who had suddenly concluded a match for him with his cousin.

Memoirs of
Sophia of
Zell.

Sophia, at the time of their marriage, was only sixteen years of age, and was a princess of great personal charms and mental endowments †, yet her attractions did not retain the affections of her husband. After she had brought him a son and a daughter, he neglected his amiable consort, and attached himself to a favourite mistress.

Such was the situation of Sophia, when count Konigsmark ‡, a Swedish nobleman, arrived at Hanover. He was a man of a good figure, and professed gallantry; had been formerly enamoured of Sophia at Zell, and was supposed to have made some impression on her heart. On the sight of her, his passion, which had been diminished by absence, broke out with increasing violence; he had the imprudence publicly to renew his attentions; and as George was absent at the army, he made his solicitations with redoubled ardour. Information of his attachment, and of his success, was conveyed to Ernest Augustus; and one evening, as the count came out of her apartment, and was crossing a passage, he was put to death by persons placed to intercept him, in the presence of the elector; and tradition still marks the

* From lord Orford.

† Rimius.

‡ Brother of count Konigsmark, who was accused of having suborned assassins to murder

Thomas Thynne, and of countess Konigsmark, mistress of Augustus the Second of Poland.

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spot where this murder was committed. Sophia was immediately put under arrest; and though she solemnly protested her innocence, yet circumstances spoke strongly against her.

George, who never loved his wife, gave implicit credit to the account of her infidelity, as related by his father; consented to her imprisonment, and obtained from the ecclesiastical consistory, a divorce, which was passed on the 28th of December 1694. And even her father, the duke of Zell, who doated on his only daughter, does not seem to have entertained any doubts of her guilt, for he always continued upon the strictest terms of friendship with Ernest Augustus, and his son-in-law.

The unfortunate Sophia was confined in the castle of Alden, situated on the small river Aller, in the duchy of Zell. She terminated her miserable existence, after a long captivity of thirty-two years, on the 13th of November 1726, in the sixty-first year of her age, only seven months before the death of George the First; and she was announced in the Gazette, under the title of the Electress Dowager of Hanover.

During her whole confinement, she behaved with no less mildness than dignity; and on receiving the sacrament once every week, never omitted, on that awful occasion, making the most solemn asseverations, that she was not guilty of the crime laid to her charge. Subsequent circumstances have come to light, which appear to justify her memory; and reports are current at Hanover, that her character was basely defamed, and that she fell a sacrifice to the jealousy and perfidy of the countess of Platen, favourite mistress of Ernest Augustus. Being enamoured of count Königsmark, who slighted her overtures, jealousy took possession of her breast; she determined to sacrifice both the lover and the princess to her vengeance, and circumstances favoured her design.

The prince was absent at the army; Ernest Augustus was a man of warm passions and violent temper, easily irritated, and when irritated, incapable of controul. Sophia herself had treated count Königsmark with regard and attention, and the lover was hot-headed, self-sufficient, priding himself on his personal accomplishments, and accustomed to succeed in affairs of gallantry.

Those who exculpate Sophia, assert either that a common visit was construed into an act of criminality; or that the countess of Platen, at a late hour, summoned count Königsmark in the name of the princess, though without her connivance; that on being introduced, Sophia was surprised at his intrusion; that on quitting the apartment, he was discovered by Ernest Augustus, whom the countess had placed in the gallery, and was instantly assassinated by persons whom she had suborned for that purpose.

It

It is impossible, at this distance of time, to discover and trace the circumstances of this mysterious transaction, on which no person at the court of Hanover durst at that time deliver his opinion; but the sudden murder of count Konigsmark may be urged as a corroboration of this statement, for had his guilt, and that of Sophia been unequivocal, would he not have been arrested and brought to a trial for the purpose of proving their connection, and confronting him with the unfortunate princess.

Many persons of credit at Hanover have not scrupled, since the death of Ernest Augustus and George the First, to express their belief that the imputation cast on Sophia was false and unjust. It is also reported, that her husband having made an offer of reconciliation, she gave this noble and disdainful answer of haughty virtue, unconscious of stain: "If what I am accused of is true, I am unworthy of his bed; and if my accusation is false, he is unworthy of me. I will not accept his offers."

George the Second, who, doated on his mother, was fully convinced of her innocence. He once made an attempt to see her, and even crossed the Aller on horseback, opposite to the Castle, but was prevented from having an interview with her by the baron de Bulow, to whose care the Elector, her husband, had committed her. Had she survived his accession, he intended to restore her to liberty, and to acknowledge her as queen dowager. Her memory was so dear to him, that he secretly kept her portrait in his possession; and the morning after the news of the death of George the First had reached London, Mrs. Howard observed (in the antichamber of the king's apartment) a picture of a woman in the electoral robes, which proved to be that of Sophia.

George the Second told queen Caroline, that in making some repairs in the palace of Hanover, the bones of count Konigsmark were found under the floor of the antichamber which led to the apartment of Sophia. The queen mentioned this fact to Sir Robert Walpole*, and in various conversations which she held on this subject, she appeared fully convinced of her innocence; an opinion which the minister † himself constantly adhered to.

* From lord Orford.

† The account of Sophia of Zell, is derived from the MS. Journal of N. W. Wraxall Esq; Etough's Papers, and various communications which I received at Hanover, and Polnitz's Memoirs. A pretended history is published under the title of *Histoire secrète*

de la Duchesse d'Hanovre, Epouse de George Premier, Roi de la Grande Bretagne. Les malheurs de cette infortunée princesse, sa prison au Chateau d'Ahlen où elle a fini ses jours; ses intelligences secrètes avec le comte de Konigsmark, assassiné à ce sujet, which is a mere romance.

PERIOD THE FOURTH:

From the Accession of GEORGE the Second, to the Resignation of
Lord TOWNSHEND.

1727—1730.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST:

1727.

*Accession and Character of George the Second.—Education—Character—Person
—Conduct—and Influence of Queen Caroline.—Account of Mrs. Howard,
afterwards Countess of Suffolk.*

GEORGE the Second, son of George the First, by Sophia, princess of Luneburgh Zell, was born at Hanover the 30th of October 1683, and principally educated under the direction of his grandmother, the electress Sophia. Being at a very early period initiated into the profession of arms, he made the campaign of 1708 with the allied army in the Netherlands, under the command of the duke of Marlborough. He greatly distinguished himself as a volunteer at the battle of Oudenard, where he charged the enemy at the head of the Hanoverian dragoons, and had his horse shot under him*. In 1708, he was created duke of Cambridge, and knight of the garter; and at the accession of George the First, was so elated, that he said to an English gentleman, "I have not one drop of blood in my veins which is not English, and at the service of my father's subjects†." He accompanied the king to England; soon after he had taken his seat in the privy council, was created prince of Wales; and during the king's absence in 1716, was appointed guardian and lieutenant of the realm.

* Rimius's Memoirs of the House of Brunswick.

† Polnitz, vol. iv. p. 230. 232.

The unfortunate misunderstanding which took place between him and his father, has been already related; and although a reconciliation was effected through the interposition of Devonshire and Walpole, yet it was more apparent than real: the king gave a strong proof that his jealousy was not abated, by never again consigning to him the government of affairs during his absence. Notwithstanding this cause of dissatisfaction, the prince, from the period of the reconciliation, seldom formally opposed his father's government; but passed a retired life, confining himself principally to a small circle of select friends, with whom he lived in habits of strict intimacy; of these, the earl of Scarborough and Sir Spencer Compton were the most favoured.

George the Second was, at the time of his accession, in the 45th year of his age; and bore the character of a prince of high integrity, honour, and veracity. His countenance was pleasing, dignified, and expressive, with prominent eyes, and a Roman nose. In person he was well proportioned, but much below the middle size; to which the ballad on the seven wise men alludes speaking of Richard, afterwards lord Edgumbe, who was very diminutive:

“ When Edgumbe spoke, the prince in sport
Laugh'd at the merry elf;
Rejoic'd to see within his court
One shorter than himself.

I'm glad (cry'd out the quibbling squire)
My *lowness* makes your highness *higher*.”

He possessed one great advantage over his father, that he was not ignorant of the language and constitution of England, although his knowledge of both was limited. He was naturally reserved, except to those who belonged to his household, or were admitted to his familiar society, fond of business, and of great application whenever application was necessary; well acquainted with the state of foreign affairs; and his observations, and replies to the notes of his ministers, dictated by the occasion, prove good sense, judgment, and rectitude of intentions*. His temper was warm, vehement, and irritable; prone to sudden emotions of anger, and not easily appeased. He was slow in deliberation, cautious in decision; but his opinion once formed, he became inflexible, and impatient of remonstrance. He was strictly economical, punctual in the discharge of his expences; so peculiarly methodical in all his actions and occupations, that, to use the expression of a nobleman

* Correspondence, Period IV.

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much about his person, "he seemed to think his having done a thing to-day, an unanswerable reason for his doing it to-morrow *." He was rigidly attached to etiquette and punctilious forms, and fond of military parade; without the smallest taste for the arts, or love of science; like his father, he gave no patronage to literature, unless from the suggestions of his queen, or the intercession of his ministers. Cold and phlegmatic in his general appearance, he at the same time possessed a high degree of sensibility; of which he gave many proofs, particularly on the death of his queen, and the resignation of Sir Robert Walpole, which would appear incredible to those who were not about his person, and who are not acquainted with his domestic character. The love of women was his predominant weakness; but it did not lead him into any excesses which affected his public character, or interfered with the interests of his kingdom. He had seen, and lamented, that his father had been governed by his mistresses; and was so extremely cautious to avoid a similar error, that the countess of Yarmouth, who was the only one among them who possessed any real influence over him, could seldom venture to exert her interest in public concerns. She once requested Horace Walpole to procure a trifling place for one of her servants, but charged him not to mention to the king that it was at her request; "because (she added) if it is known that I have applied, I have no chance of succeeding †."

Conduct to
queen Caroline.

But his conduct was far different in regard to queen Caroline, of whose judgment and good sense he had the highest opinion, and in whom he ever placed the most implicit confidence. Some of the French writers call history *la fable convenue*, and not without some degree of reason; for most histories are written either by authors who have been themselves interested in the events which they relate, and gloss over the transactions of their own party, or are composed by writers who have not access to original papers, know little more than common occurrences, and derive the principal source of information from uncertain publications, traditional information, gazettes, and news-papers. The personage whose character I am attempting to delineate, will afford a striking example of the truth of these observations; for it is a remarkable fact, that the historians of the reign of George the Second, scarcely mention the name of queen Caroline, who almost entirely governed the king during the first ten years of his reign; who bore her faculties so meekly, and with such extraordinary prudence, as never to excite the least uneasiness even in a sovereign highly tenacious of his authority, but contrived that her opinion

* Lord Hervey to H. Walpole, Oct. 31 1735.

† From Lord Walpole.

should

should appear as if it had been his own; who solely occasioned the continuance of Sir Robert Walpole in the ministry; who patronised and promoted Herring, Hoadley, Clarke, Hare, Sherlocke, Butler, and Pearce; and without whose recommendation or concurrence, scarcely any situation in church or state was conferred.

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Carolina Wilhelmina, daughter of John Frederic, Margrave of Anspach, by the princess of Saxe-Eysenach, was born in 1683. Having lost her father when she was very young, and her mother marrying John George the Fourth, elector of Saxony, she was left under the guardianship of Frederic, elector of Brandenburg, afterwards king of Prussia; passed part of her early days at the court of Berlin*, and received her education under the superintendence of her aunt, the accomplished Sophia Charlotte†, sister of George the First. From her example and instructions, she imbibed that politeness of

Her education, character, and person.

* Polnitz.

† Sophia Charlotte, the second wife of Frederic, was the daughter of Ernest Augustus, elector of Hanover. This elegant and accomplished princess was born in 1668; and in 1681, having espoused Frederic, then electoral prince, became, on his accession to the throne, the great ornament of his splendid court. Her features were regular, yet expressive; her form, though below the middle stature, was elegant and graceful; her demeanour dignified and polite; and her conduct ever irreproachable. She never interfered in affairs of state, though always ready, when called upon, to aid with her counsels, journeys, and correspondence, the views of the king. Her understanding was highly cultivated; she spoke the principal languages of Europe with such ease and fluency, that she usually addressed herself to foreigners in their respective tongues; she was well versed in history, conversant in different branches of natural philosophy, and not unacquainted even with scholastic divinity. Though her learning was so profound, that she was styled the Female Philosopher, she was not only extremely diffident, but careful to avoid the affectation of wishing to display her multifarious acquirements. She was no stranger to the polite accomplishments, fond of dancing, and did not disdain to be an actress in plays which were performed by her command: she excelled in music, sung and composed with taste; and was the great patroness of science and the arts. She drew Leibnitz to Berlin, and astonished that great philosopher with the extent of her capacity, the

depth of her researches, and the solidity of her observations. She died at Hanover in 1705, on a visit to her mother the electress Sophia, in the 37th year of her age; and displayed on her death-bed the utmost calmness and resignation. To the king her husband she wrote a tender letter, thanking him for his care, and recommending her domestics to his protection. To her brother, who was disconsolate at her approaching dissolution, she said, "Nothing is so natural as death; I have long considered it as a debt; and though I am young enough to have lived a few years longer, yet I feel no regret in dying." When La Bergerie, a Calvinist minister, offered his spiritual assistance, she said; "Friends are proved in times of necessity; you offer your assistance at a moment when I can no longer serve you; accept my thanks, which are all that I can bestow." Then turning to him, as he was going to exhort her, she continued; "For twenty years I have seriously examined my religion; I have perused the books which treat on that subject with too much attention to be in the smallest doubt; you can say nothing to me which I do not know; and I can assure you, that I depart in tranquillity." Her physician representing to her that she increased her complaint by speaking; "Adieu then, La Bergerie (she added); I remain your good friend." Observing one of her attendants weeping, she exclaimed, "Why do you weep? could you think that I was immortal?" And then stretching out her hand to her brother; "Dear brother, (she cried) I am suffocated;" and in an instant expired.

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N n

demeanour;

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demeanour and dignity of character, those sentiments of philosophy, that ardent love of learning, and fondness for metaphysical knowledge, which merited the eulogium of Clarke and Leibnitz.

She gave an early instance of her attachment to the protestant religion. The fame of her beauty and accomplishments attracted the notice of the archduke Charles, son of the emperor Leopold the First, and afterwards Emperor himself, who made a tender of his hand. Not allured by the splendor of the family into which she might have been adopted, she declined the offer without hesitation: "But Providence (observes Addison) kept a store in reward for such an exalted virtue; and, by the secret methods of its wisdom, opened a way for her to become the greatest of her sex among those who profess that faith to which she adhered with so much Christian magnanimity *."

Caroline espoused, in 1705, George the Second, then electoral prince of Hanover. She was esteemed handsome before she had the small-pox, and became too corpulent. Tickell did not flatter her in his poem of Kensington Gardens, when he said;

"Here England's daughter, darling of the land,
Sometimes, surrounded with her virgin band,
Gleams through the shades. She, tow'ring o'er the rest,
Stands fairest of the fairer kind confest;
Form'd to gain hearts that Brunswick's cause deny'd,
And charm a people to her father's side †."

She had a hand and arm greatly admired for its whiteness and elegance, a penetrating eye, "and a smile celestial ‡," an expressive countenance, great sweetness and grace, particularly when she spoke. But these charms of her person were far surpassed by the endowments of her mind. She possessed quickness of apprehension, a natural good understanding, which had been duly cultivated; and obtained a considerable knowledge in many branches of useful and polite literature §.

Her levees were a strange picture of the motley character and manners of a queen and a learned woman. She received company while she was at her toilette; prayers, and sometimes a sermon, were read; learned men and divines were intermixed with courtiers and ladies of the household: the conversation turned on metaphysical subjects, blended with repartees, sallies of mirth, and the tittle-tattle of a drawing-room. She had a happy turn for

* Freeholder, No. 21.

‡ Tickell.

† Tickell's Kensington Gardens, p. 258.

§ Rimius.

conversation,

conversation, and a readiness in adapting her discourse to the persons with whom she talked; possessed peculiar talents for mirth and humour; excelled in mimicry, and was fond of displaying it; was pleased with making a repartee herself, and with hearing it from others. Her conduct, during the unfortunate misunderstanding which took place between George the First and her husband, when prince of Wales, was so prudent and dignified, that the late king always behaved to her with marks of due respect and affection, though he never cordially loved her. Yet notwithstanding her courtesy, affability of deportment, condescension to men of letters, and fondness for social intercourse, she had a high notion of the regal station, and was partial to the etiquette of a court; she seldom forgot that she was a queen, and always kept up a due state both in public and private. She would occasionally dine with Sir Robert Walpole at Chelsea; but even her visits to a favourite minister were subjected to form and etiquette: she sat down to table with lady Walpole, the royal family whom she brought with her, and the lady in waiting: Sir Robert always stood behind her chair, and gave her the first plate; then retired into another apartment, where dinner was served for him and the queen's household*.

Queen Caroline was fond of conversing and corresponding with men of learning, and particularly with divines, whom she often perplexed with questions concerning the doctrines of the different churches, and consulted with a view of settling her faith. Hoadley, Clarke, Hare, and Sherlocke, were among the number to whom she principally applied. She carried on a correspondence on these subjects, by means of her bed-chamber woman, Mrs. Clayton, afterwards lady Sundon, who had acquired a powerful ascendancy over her. The divine whom she most particularly noticed, and by whose conversation she often owned that she was most instructed, was Dr. Clarke, whose profound learning, in all branches of sacred and profane literature, was scarcely ever equalled, whose piety was unquestioned, and whose playful manners and placid temper rendered him as amiable as he was learned. Dr. Clarke had only the rectory of St. James's, which was given him by queen Anne, and the mastership of Wigston Hospital; and queen Caroline proposed placing him on the bench, an honour which Clarke invariably declined. Finding that he persisted in his refusal, she desired Sir Robert Walpole to try the powers of his rhetoric, which had never been employed in vain on a similar occasion; the minister obeyed; and in a conference at Kensington palace, used every argument in his power to prevail on Clarke

* From Lord Orford.

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to accept the proffered dignity; when Clarke declined, he continued to press it; and the conference was so long, that the candles were burnt down in the sockets; and the pages came into the apartment to know if fresh lights were not wanted *. But the rhetoric of the minister had no effect, and the queen was highly disappointed, that she was prevented from placing Dr. Clarke on the bench of bishops.

Queen Caroline maintained a correspondence with Leibnitz on the most abstract sciences, in which she supremely delighted; and in the course of this literary intercourse, the German philosopher having insinuated some suspicions that the foundations of natural religion were in danger of being hurt by the doctrines of Sir Isaac Newton, she applied to Clarke for an answer to this suggestion. The answer brought on a reply, and the reply a second answer, until the controversy was carried on with all the spirit and learning which those great philosophers could throw into such dry subjects as the principles of natural religion and philosophy, and free-will and fatality. They submitted their respective arguments to the princess as to an umpire; and vied in unfolding their systems in as conspicuous a manner as the nature of so intricate a subject would allow. The princess was highly flattered with this arbitration, and permitted Dr. Clarke, whose opinion she seems to have embraced, to dedicate to her the account of the controversy. In this dedication, the learned author has not omitted to pay a tribute to her desire of knowledge and love of truth, in a strain of panegyric which could hardly be avoided on such an occasion. Nor was it solely dictated by flattery; for Whiston † informs us, that he often heard Clarke speak with admiration of her marvellous sagacity and judgment, in the several parts of the dispute.

But although this accomplished princess possessed considerable influence over George the Second, she had acted with so much caution, and behaved with such moderation and prudence, that she was considered at the time of his accession, by the party in opposition, as a mere cypher, and the whole power and influence over the king was supposed to be lodged in the hands of Mrs. Howard, afterwards countess of Suffolk.

Character of
Mrs. How-
ard, Coun-
tess of Suf-
folk.

Henrietta, sister of John, the first earl of Buckinghamshire, was eldest daughter of Sir Henry Hobart ‡, of Blickling, in Norfolk, and espoused Charles Howard, younger son of Henry, fifth earl of Suffolk, whom she accompanied to Hanover before the death of queen Anne. Having ingratiated herself into the favour of Caroline, then electoral princess, she accompanied

* From Lord Orford and Etough's Papers.

† Whiston's Historical Memoirs of Clarke.

‡ Collins's Peerage.

her

her to England, and became her bed-chamber woman. If we were to draw an estimate of the understanding and character of Mrs. Howard, from the representations of Pope *, Swift, and Gay, during the time of her favour, we might suppose that she possessed every accomplishment and good quality which were ever the lot of a woman.

The real truth is, that Mrs. Howard was more remarkable for beauty than for understanding, and the passion which the king entertained for her was rather derived from chance † than from any combination of those transcendent qualities, which Swift and Pope ascribed to their court divinity. She had been long wholly unnoticed by the prince, who was enamoured of another lady that was more cruel to the royal lover than Mrs. Howard. This lady was the beautiful and lively Mary Bellenden, daughter of lord Bellenden ‡, maid of honour to queen Caroline, when princess of Wales, and a great friend of Mrs. Howard. Gay alludes to her, in his ballad entitled Damon and Cupid, as one of the reigning beauties:

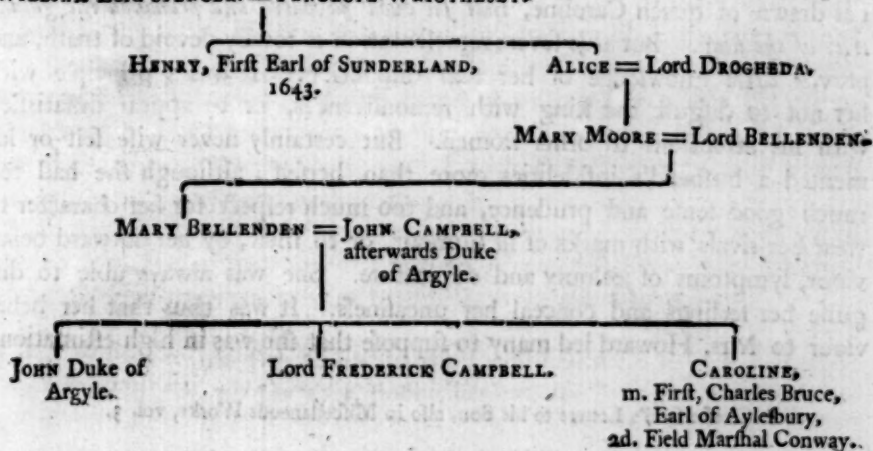
* See Pope's Letters to Swift, October 25th, 1725.—Miscellanies.—Swift's Character of Mrs. Howard.—Gay's Epistle to Pope; and other parts of their respective works.

† From lord Orford.

‡ Sir William Bellenden, created a peer after the restoration of Charles the Second, died unmarried, making a conveyance of his estate and honour to John Ker, a younger son

of William, the second earl of Roxburgh, who then changed his name to Bellenden, and took the arms. He married Mary, widow of William Ramsay, third earl of Dalhousie, and daughter of Henry Moore, first earl of Drogheda, by Alice his wife, daughter of William lord Spencer, by Penelope, daughter of Henry Wriothesly, earl of Southampton.

WILLIAM LORD SPENCER. = PENELOPE WRIOTHESLY.



" So

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" So well I'm known at court,
 " None asks where Cupid dwells;
 " But readily resort,
 " To *Bellenden's* or *Lepell's*."

She is also thus described in an old ballad, made upon the quarrel between George the First and the prince of Wales, at the christening, when the prince and all his household were ordered to quit St. James's :

" But *Bellenden* we needs must praise,
 " Who, as down the stairs she jumps;
 " Sings over the hills and far away,
 " Despising doleful dumps."

This lovely and elegant woman rejected the addresses of the prince, and espoused, in 1720, John Campbell, then groom of the bed-chamber to the prince of Wales, and afterwards duke of Argyle. She was highly favoured by queen Caroline, and universally admired as an accomplished pattern of good sense, and exemplary conduct.

The prince, after having communicated his passion for Miss Bellenden to Mrs. Howard, and being rejected, became enamoured of his confidante.

The queen's
 behaviour
 to Mrs.
 Howard.

Lord Chesterfield has observed, in the unfavourable portrait * which he has drawn of queen Caroline, *that she even favoured and promoted the gallantries of the king*. But this severe representation is totally devoid of truth, and proves little knowledge of her real disposition. It was a principle with her not to disgust the king with remonstrances, or to appear dissatisfied with his attentions to other women. But certainly never wife felt or lamented a husband's infidelities more than herself; although she had too much good sense and prudence, and too much respect for her character to treat her rivals with marks of ill humour, or to shew, by her outward behaviour, symptoms of jealousy and displeasure. She was always able to disguise her feelings and conceal her uneasiness. It was thus that her behaviour to Mrs. Howard led many to suppose that she was in high estimation;

* Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, also in Miscellaneous Works, vol. 3.

and

and Swift, Pope, and Gay repeatedly call her the chief favourite of the queen.

To her particular friends, queen Caroline was not wanting in complaints of the king's infidelities, and she used to call his favourite, by way of banter, her sister Howard, and this expression was considered by the friends of the mistress as a proof of the queen's partiality and kindness, whereas it was in reality the strongest mark of aversion and contempt. But, in fact, the forced complacency of her outward behaviour, was a violent effort of prudence and discretion, and she never failed to oppose the rise of those who paid their court to the mistress. Among many instances which may be enumerated, I shall select those of Gay, Swift, and Chesterfield.

Gay began paying his court to her when she was electoral princess, and while he accompanied the earl of Clarendon as his secretary to Hanover. But the embassy lasted only nineteen days; and being disappointed of his hopes of preferment by the death of queen Anne, the poet turned himself towards the rising sun, and soon after the accession of George the First, drew the character of Caroline in a high strain of panegyric *.

The princess, not insensible to praise, received Gay, soon after her arrival in England, with great kindness, and gave him hopes of promotion. From this period he commenced courtier, paid a regular attendance, and was honoured with many marks of her patronage and protection. He continued, however, his attendance at court for twelve years without obtaining a solid reward of his assiduity. At her command, he wrote his fables for the duke of Cumberland, and being of a sanguine disposition, formed high expectations of promotion when the accession of George the Second would permit his patrons to provide for him. When that event took place, his hopes were greatly magnified on the queen's telling Mrs. Howard; in allusion to the fable of the Hare and many Friends †, that she would take up the hare. But his expectations were by these means raised so high, that he considered the offer of the place of gentleman usher to the princess Louisa, though above £.200 a year, as an insult, and rejected it with scorn.

Swift was convinced that the minister had prevented the bounty of queen Caroline from being shewn to the author of the Hare and many Friends, and he observes, alluding to it in a copy of verses addressed to Gay;

“ Fain would I think our female friend sincere,

“ Till *Bob*, the poet's foe, possess her ear, &c.”

* An Epistle to a Lady, occasioned by the Arrival of the Princess of Wales.

† Swift's Works, vol. 16. p. 170.

Chapter 31.

1727.

Jealousy of her.

Gay disappointed in his expectations from her protection.

In

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In another place, Swift asserts, that it was principally owing to the dedication, prefixed to the Pastorals, in honour of Bolingbroke, and to some expressions in his fables, which displeased the court. He repeats this accusation in his letters and works, and had even the rudeness to hint it to Sir Robert Walpole himself, when he dined with him at Chelsea *. Gay was of the same opinion, and in the second part of his fables, which were not printed till after his death, is full of sarcastic and splenetic allusions to the minister. But as Walpole was neither of a jealous or vindictive disposition, there is no reason to give credit to the aspersions of his enemies, and to suppose that he used his influence over queen Caroline, for the purpose of injuring Gay, particularly when another and a more natural motive of her conduct may be suggested.

In fact, Gay was the innocent cause of his own disgrace, for he thought that Mrs. Howard was all powerful at court, and that he, whom Swift humorously calls † one of her led captains, should rise by her recommendation. Pope also, in a letter to Swift, alluding to Mrs. Howard, says, *Gay puts his whole trust in that lady whom I described to you*, and whom you take to be an allegorical creature of fancy. And Gay thus expresses himself to Swift, "Mrs. Howard has declared herself very strongly, both to the king and queen, as my protector ‡." But in these words, they unconsciously declare the cause of his disfavour. The queen's jealousy of the interference and credit of the mistress, obstructed his promotion; and his own indiscretion afterwards, destroyed every hope. Soon after this disappointment, he produced the Beggar's Opera; and both his conversation and writings were so full of invectives against the court, that all expectations of farther notice from the queen were obviously relinquished.

Swift.

Swift also proved the ill policy of attempting to ingratiate himself with the queen through the medium of Mrs. Howard. With a view of changing his preferences in Ireland for others in England, which the princess seemed to express an inclination to promote, he maintained a correspondence with Mrs. Howard, whom he praised in the most fulsome manner, and courted with the most affected assiduity, by letters when he was absent, and by constant personal attendance when he was in England. But as soon as the efforts of Mrs. Howard proved unsuccessful, Swift turned his satire against her, on whom he had heaped such unbounded encomiums, imputed his failure solely to her want of sincerity;

* Swift's Works, vol. 16. p. 169.

† Swift's Works, vol. 19. p. 252.

‡ Swift's Works, vol. 16. p. 168.

and

and reproached her in very bitter and disrespectful terms. Lady Betty Germaine, and his friend Gay, in vain endeavoured to justify Mrs. Howard, and to prove that she was not to blame; but the misanthropic Swift, when he had once formed his opinion, was not easily convinced by any arguments. He says, in a letter to lady Betty Germaine, "For these reasons, I did always, and do still think, Mrs. Howard, now lady Suffolk, an absolute courtier." When this character was shewn to lady Suffolk, she mildly observed, "It is very different from that which he sent me himself, and which I have in his own hand writing *."

The earl of Chesterfield is another remarkable instance. He had long coveted the post of secretary of state, and an arrangement had been made in his favour. After an audience of the queen, to which he was introduced by Walpole, and thanking her for her concurrence, he had the imprudence to make a long visit to the mistress; the queen was informed of the circumstance, and his appointment did not take place †. At another time, he had requested the queen to speak to the king for some trifling favour. The queen promised, but forgot it; a few days afterwards, recollecting her promise, she expressed regret at her forgetfulness, and added, she would certainly mention it that very day. Chesterfield replied, that her majesty need not give herself that trouble, for lady Suffolk had spoken to the king. The queen made no reply, but on seeing the king, told him she had long promised to mention a trifling request to his majesty, but it was now needless, because lord Chesterfield had just informed her, that she had been anticipated by lady Suffolk. The king, who always preserved great decorum with the queen, and was very unwilling to have it supposed that the favourite interfered, was extremely displeased, both with lord Chesterfield and his mistress. The consequence was, that in a short time lady Suffolk went to Bath for her health, and returned no more to court; Chesterfield was dismissed from his office, and never heard the reason until two years before his death, when he was informed by the late earl of Orford, that his disgrace was owing to his having offended the queen by paying court to lady Suffolk ‡.

Lord Chesterfield.

* From lord Orford.

† Etough.—From the communication of Sir Robert Walpole.

‡ Her husband having succeeded to the title of earl of Suffolk, on the death of his brother in June 1731, she became countess of Suffolk. At the period of her retirement from court, she was a widow, her husband

having died on the 28th of September 1733, and she espoused, in July 1735, George Berkeley, fourth son of Charles, second earl of Berkeley. Lady Suffolk lived to an advanced age, not dying till 1767; she left no issue, an only son, which she had by her first husband, dying in 1745 unmarried.

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CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND:

1727.

Rumours of a Change in Administration.—Intrigues of the Tories, Pulteney, and Bolingbroke.—Character of Sir Spencer Compton, who declines the Office of prime Minister.—Continuation of Townshend and Walpole, by the Intervention of Queen Caroline.—The good Effects of her Influence over the King.

Rumours of
a change of
ministry.

THE news of the king's death had no sooner reached London, than a general belief was current that the administration would be totally changed. It was credited, that Sir Robert Walpole had irretrievably offended the new king, when prince of Wales, as he had been frequently heard to protest, that when he came to the throne, that minister should never be employed.

Intrigues of
Pulteney :

Pulteney, before their open rupture, had informed the prince of Wales of some disrespectful expressions used on a former occasion, and told him that he was sold to his father's ministers, by persons who considered nothing but themselves and their own interest, and were in haste to make their fortunes *. Since their quarrel, he had undoubtedly exaggerated this representation, and, as he continued on good terms at Leicester House, naturally used his whole credit against Walpole.

Of Boling-
broke and the
Tories.

Bolingbroke and the Tories had also caballed at Leicester House, and were supported by the whole weight and influence of the favourite, Mrs. Howard. Swift also, in a letter to his friend Dr. Sheridan, mentions the hopes of the Tories, and the certain dismissal of Walpole.

In fact, Walpole himself was at this moment convinced of his removal, and yet was well satisfied that his exclusion could not be of long continuance. In conformity with these sentiments, he said to his friend Sir William Yonge, "I shall certainly go out; but let me recommend you not to go into violent opposition, as we must soon come in again †."

In this moment of probable disgrace, Walpole was deserted by many of his friends; and Sir Spencer Compton, whom the king had already avowed

* Answer to one Part of an infamous Libel,

† From Sir George Yonge.

his intention of appointing minister, became the idol of the day. But the event turned out otherwise, and the public expectations were disappointed.

It is now well known, that the continuance of the new administration was solely owing to the influence of queen Caroline; and writers of great credit, but not acquainted with the interior situation of Leicester House at that period, have not scrupled to ascribe her patronage of Sir Robert Walpole, solely to the offers which he made to obtain from parliament a jointure of £. 100,000 a year, when Sir Spencer Compton could only venture to propose £. 60,000, as if motives of sordid interest had *alone* induced the queen to protect the minister; and as if her conduct was derived from instantaneous impulse, unconnected with any previous communication or intercourse. The offer had doubtless its due effect; but a number of circumstances combined to influence her in favour of Sir Robert Walpole.

The queen was by no means ignorant of his character and abilities. While he was in opposition to government, from 1717 to 1720, he had continued in the highest favour with the prince of Wales. During this period, a woman of her good sense, could not fail of distinguishing that capacity for business, those powers of intellect, which raised him to the head of his party; and his wife and able conduct upon the failure of the South Sea scheme, naturally increased this prepossession in his favour.

He had, in conjunction with lord Townshend, gratified the prince of Wales, by obtaining from the king the garter for the earl of Scarborough. And count Broglie, the French ambassador, observes * on this occasion, "That ministers not unfrequently procured places for those persons who were attached to the prince, from the consideration that the time might come, when such a conduct would turn out to their advantage."

The duke of Devonshire, who had always been the great friend and supporter of Walpole, had continued on good terms with the princess of Wales. He had strongly impressed her with sentiments of high regard for his abilities and ministerial capacity, and had represented him as the person who had principally counteracted the intrigues of the Jacobites, discovered the plot of bishop Atterbury, and whose good offices were essentially employed in preserving the family on the throne. Nor can a stronger proof be alledged of the height to which this confidential intercourse was carried, than that the resolution which he had once formed to resign, was communicated by the duke of Devonshire to the princess, and that she persuaded him to relinquish the design †.

* Count Broglie to the king of France, 24 July, 1724. Correspondence, Period III.

† Onslow's Remarks. Correspondence, Period IV.

Period IV.

1727 to 1730.

But the principal cause which secured to him the protection of the queen, was his prudent behaviour in regard to Mrs. Howard. He had penetration sufficient to foresee, that George the Second would be governed by his wife, whom he adored, and of whose abilities and good sense he had formed the highest idea, and not by his mistress, of whose judgment he never entertained any favourable opinion. The minister had always treated the princess of Wales with the highest respect, and declined paying court to Mrs. Howard; a mode of conduct, which, according to the opinion of superficial observers, would inevitably bring on his disgrace, but which, in effect, contributed to his continuance in office. A contrary mode of proceeding had inspired the queen with an invincible aversion to Pulteney, Bolingbroke, and the Tories. Hence she used all her influence with the king not to change the administration.

Walpole's
first inter-
view with
George the
Second.

The account of the king's death was brought first to the minister at Chelsea, in a dispatch from lord Townshend, who had accompanied George the First to the continent. He instantly repaired to the palace at Richmond. The king was then retired, as was his usual custom, to his afternoon's nap. On being informed that his father was dead, he continued for some time incredulous, until he was told that the minister was waiting in the antichamber with the express. He at length started up, and made his appearance half dressed; but he still retained his unbelief, until the dispatch from Townshend was produced. Walpole having knelt down, and kissed his hand, inquired whom his majesty would be pleased to appoint to draw up the declaration to the privy council? "Compton," replied the king with great abruptness, and Walpole quitted the apartment under the most mortifying impressions. He immediately waited on Sir Spencer Compton with the king's commands, who, unacquainted with the etiquette and forms of expression used on the occasion, avowed his ignorance, and requested the minister to draw up the declaration. Walpole complied, and Compton conveyed it to the king*.

Character of
Sir Spencer
Compton.

1695.

Sir Spencer Compton was second surviving son of James earl of Northampton; after having received a liberal education, and improved himself by foreign travel, he was introduced into parliament at an early period, and deserted the principles of his family, who were Tories, by adhering to the Whigs. He was made treasurer to the prince of Denmark, appointed manager for the trial of Sacheverel, was chairman in several important committees of elections and privileges, in which he acquitted himself with much

* From lord Orford.

satisfaction,

satisfaction, and made himself master of the forms and proceedings of the House. At the accession of George the First, he was appointed treasurer to the prince of Wales; and his constant adherence to the Whigs, his intimate acquaintance with Walpole, his numerous connections, and a character he had acquired for dispatch of business, secured him the place of speaker without opposition. With that honourable office he united, in 1721, the post of paymaster of the forces, and, treasurer of Chelsea Hospital. He was created knight of the bath on the revival of that order. Compton was not distinguished for brilliancy of genius, or eminence of abilities. His formal and solemn manner contributed to the support of his authority as speaker, and seemed to denote extent of knowledge and profundity of thought, while his assiduity in business, and punctuality in accounts, rendered him respectable in the opinion of George the Second, who being extremely regular in all his proceedings, loved regularity in others, and esteemed it one of the most essential requisites in a minister. Such was the person whom George the Second had selected; and as the monarch was usually deemed inflexible in his resolutions, the appointment seemed irrevocably fixed.

Walpole passed the two days which immediately followed the accession of the new king, in great agitation and concern, and held several meetings with his friends at Devonshire House, to consult on the best mode of proceeding. Scrope*, secretary to the treasury, who was admitted to one of these conferences, described the whole company as without the smallest expectation, absorbed in gloom and consternation. Either the next, or the following day, Scrope repeated his visit to the desponding minister, and found no alteration in his mien and appearance. He first encouraged him in general terms to hope, and then added reasons for that encouragement, which he had from one, whose name he could not divulge. His friend had informed him, that queen Caroline was displeased with Compton, who had been deficient in deference and respect, and had conceived a high opinion of Walpole's ability for finance. She used to converse with George the First at chapel, on political subjects; and once in particular, having observed that a want of proper funds would oblige him to disband his Hanover troops, he replied, "No, for Walpole can convert stones into gold†." This anecdote recurred to her recollection; she communicated it to the king, and exerted herself to abate his predilection for Compton, and influence him in favour of Walpole. The truth of the information soon appeared; the queen was now assiduously employed in removing the prejudices of the king. She represented the folly and hazard of dismissing a well established ministry,

* Minutes of Scrope's Conversations with Etough. Correspondence, Period IV.

† See chapter 30.

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and of forming a motley cabinet of Whigs and Tories; and artfully took an opportunity of hinting the imprudence of placing a man at the head of the ministry, who could not draw up the declaration to be laid before the privy council, but was compelled to have recourse to him who was about to be dismissed; she also hinted to him, that Sir Robert Walpole had agreed to carry through the house of commons, an augmentation of £. 130,000 to the civil list.

These representations had their effect; and with them, many other causes co-operated to change the king's sentiments. Sir Spencer Compton found himself unequal to the weight of government, and was not eager to take upon him so responsible an office. He was convinced, that he could not bear up against the opposition of Sir Robert Walpole, who had so much weight in the house of commons, and who would be supported by the united interests of Newcastle, Devonshire, Townshend, and the great leaders of the Whigs, unless a Tory administration was formed. George the Second was averse to throw himself into the hands of the Tories, and yet could not form a new ministry, which promised stability, without taking that step. Pulteney, the only man of great weight and influence among the Whigs in opposition, was by no means attached to the Tories, and would not have heartily coalesced with them. Bolingbroke was so extremely unpopular, that his re-establishment in the house of lords, and his admission into the ministry, would have occasioned great murmurs and discontents among those who usually supported government. Lord Carteret, the only man of abilities who was cordially inclined to join the Tories, had little personal consequence, was not the leader of any party, and did not possess the smallest influence in the house of commons.

The situation of foreign affairs also no less contributed to confirm the king in his resolution not to remove the ministry. The treaty of Hanover had been recently concluded, and the negotiations for the consummation of that alliance were in great forwardness. They had been planned and were conducting by lord Townshend, in co-operation with France. The opposition had warmly resisted the treaty, and might have introduced a new plan, which must have deranged and overturned the whole system of foreign politics. Cardinal Fleury, who then governed France, was intimately connected with Horace Walpole; he had adopted the pacific sentiments which influenced the English cabinet, and deprecated the change of that system which had kept Europe in peace for so long a period. When the news of the king's death reached Paris, Horace Walpole requested and obtained an immediate conference, which took place at Versailles on the ensuing day. In this conference,

ference, the French minister conveyed, in the strongest terms, professions of friendship from Louis the Fifteenth to George the Second; and in his own name declared his firm resolution to maintain the good understanding between the two crowns. He also expressed these sentiments in a letter which he wrote on the same day to Horace Walpole. Immediately after the conference *, Horace Walpole quitted Paris, without waiting for leave of absence, repaired to London, and delivered his letter to the king in person. The king was at first extremely dissatisfied with him for quitting his station so abruptly; but during the conference, which lasted two hours †, he gradually softened, as Horace Walpole explained, with great address, the relative situations of England and France, effaced the ill impressions that he had entertained of his and his brother's conduct, and confirmed the sentiments of the French cabinet, which were contained in the letter from cardinal Fleury. Accordingly, the king wrote, with his own hand, a letter ‡ to the cardinal, in which he declared his resolution to pursue the same measures as were pursued by his father, and to continue the same ministers who had conducted those measures.

Under these circumstances, the offer which had been made to Compton, was the only remaining impediment to the continuance of Walpole. The manner of surmounting this difficulty was previously concerted. The queen having, in the presence of Walpole, repeated to Compton the intimation that the king intended to place him at the head of the treasury; Walpole instantly declared his ready acquiescence, and gave assurances of his best assistance and support. Compton was extremely affected at this instance of his master's kindness, and shed tears, as he declared his incapacity to undertake so arduous a trust §.

While this scene was passing in the closet, the door of Sir Spencer Compton's house in St. James's Square was besieged by persons of all ranks, who crowded to pay their court to the new minister. As Walpole was passing through the square in his carriage, he said to a friend who was with him, "Did you observe how my house is deserted; and how that door is crowded with carriages? To-morrow the scene will be changed: that house will be deserted, and mine will be more frequented than ever."

* Memoires de Montgon, tome 4. p. 401; 403.

† Etough. From Horace Walpole, Period V.

‡ Duke of Newcastle to Mr. Robinson and the earl of Waldegrave. "Correspondence. Montgon mentions the conference between

Fleury and Horace Walpole, and asserts that cardinal Fleury wrote a letter to the king of England; but this letter was to Horace Walpole. Memoires de Montgon.

§ Communicated by Sir Robert Walpole to bishop Weston. Etough Papers.

Period IV.
1727 to 1730.

As his continuance in office was the work of the queen, it was through her that it was first made known to the public. On the first drawing-room which she held at Leicester House, lady Walpole, among others, presented herself; but as there was a great crowd, and her husband was supposed to have received his dismissal, no one retired, till the queen perceiving her at some distance, beckoned to her, and said, "There I am sure I see a friend;" instantly the whole company made way. She approached the queen, and kissed her hand; her majesty spoke to her in a most gracious manner, and lady Walpole, in relating the anecdote to her son*, from whom I received it, added, "and in returning I might have walked upon their heads, so eager were they to pay their court to me."

From this moment Walpole was courted, and Compton in his turn deserted; and the ministry, with very few alterations, continued in their former offices. On the 24th of June, the very day in which Swift said the ministry would be changed, Walpole was re-appointed first lord commissioner of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, and lord Townshend again received the seal of secretary of state. An attempt † was finally made by the party, through Mrs. Howard, to prevail on the king to confer an earldom on lord Bathurst; but that measure being thwarted by the influence of the queen, they relinquished all hopes of success, and Bolingbroke retired from London in disgust.

Queen Caroline possessed great art in bending the king's mind to the purposes which his English minister thought advantageous and necessary, and in counteracting the Hanoverian cabals. She always affected to retire when the minister came into the closet, declared she did not understand business, and only remained as if to obey the king's commands, and not out of inclination or curiosity. She never appeared to listen; never gave her opinion unless solicited, and then delivered it with a modesty and humility which captivated and charmed the king. She was extremely fond of power, though she affected the contrary, and preserved her influence over the king by consummate discretion. She was a friend to peace, and appreciated and enforced the pacific system of Sir Robert Walpole, as the only means of preserving the interior tranquillity, and preventing a rebellion; as the great cause of the national prosperity, of the increase of commerce, and of the improvement of manufactures and agriculture.

The interposition of queen Caroline, and the assistance which she gave to the ministry, in regulating the conduct of affairs, was of the highest advantage both to them and the country. She was not unacquainted with the

* From Lord Orford.

† Ibid.

constitution

constitution of England; and she often prepared and smoothed the way towards obtaining the king's consent to measures which he had first opposed, because they often ran counter to his German prejudices, or to his passion for military glory.

From the time of his accession, to the hour of her death, the king had always appointed her, during his absence, regent of the kingdom, and an act of parliament was passed for the express purpose of exempting her from taking the oaths. He uniformly expressed as much satisfaction, that the affairs of government were conducted by her, as when they were conducted by himself; an honourable testimony of his confidence, which she amply merited by her consummate good sense and discretion. The reliance which George the Second placed on the queen, is evidently proved by some expressions in a letter from Da Cunha, the Portuguese minister at the Hague, to Azevedo in London. "As to your journey to Hanover, I have already given my opinion; it is certain neither the king will do any thing without the queen, nor the queen without the king: and therefore, in point of dispatch of business, London is Hanover, and Hanover is London *."

Chapter 33.

1727 to 1729.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD:

1727—1729.

Walpole obtains an Increase of the Civil List, and a Jointure of £. 100,000 for Queen Caroline.—Meeting and Proceedings of the New Parliament.—State of the Opposition.—Important Discussion on the State of the Sinking Fund and National Debt.—Report of the House of Commons on that Subject.—The King refuses to make Charles Stanhope a Lord of the Admiralty.—Foreign Affairs.—Transactions with Spain and the Emperor.—Alliance with Brunswick.—Act of the Pardo.—Congress of Soissons.—Treaty of Seville.

IN consequence of the re-appointment of Townshend and Walpole, not a single member of the cabinet council was removed, excepting the earl of Berkley, first lord of the admiralty, who was replaced by Sir George Byng, viscount Torrington, the confidential friend of Walpole; and the power of the minister was increased by the nomination of several of his friends to

New ministry confirmed.

* July 3d 1736. Orford Papers.

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subordinate

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subordinate offices in the treasury, admiralty, and other boards of government. The wisdom of continuing the administration, was proved by the unanimity with which affairs were at first conducted in parliament; and the accession of George the Second, which the Jacobites abroad and at home had impatiently expected as the signal of a new revolution, took place with the most perfect tranquillity. They founded their principal hopes on the removal of the minister. The secretary of lord Orrery, had observed to the exiled bishop of Rochester, that if the project to destroy Sir Robert Walpole was successful, he had more hopes of seeing the Chevalier restored, to the satisfaction of himself and subjects, than from any Alberoni or foreign assistance in the world. Atterbury himself also acknowledged that the king knew his interest too well to encourage any attempts against the minister*. The general despondency which they now testified, was equal to the ardour of their former expectations, and sufficiently proves that he was considered as the great support of the protestant succession, and the bulwark of the religion and constitution.

Disappointment
and
inactivity of
opposition.

June 15th.
Proceedings
in parliament.

The opposition seems to have been stunned with the re-appointment of the minister, whose disgrace they had fondly anticipated, and the business was carried through the house of commons almost with perfect unanimity. The day after the arrival of the express, with official intelligence of the death of George the First, the parliament assembled in conformity to the act of settlement, and was prorogued by commission to the 27th. On that day, the king came to the house of peers, and in his speech from the throne, after expressing his concern for the death of his father, his determination to preserve the constitution inviolable, and to secure to all his subjects the full enjoyment of their religious and civil rights; he gave his full sanction to the late measures. The address of condolence and congratulation, moved by Sir Paul Methuen, and seconded by Walpole, was carried without opposition. It was drawn up in such terms as sufficiently proved that he thought himself secure of all the influence and power which he had hitherto possessed†. On the 3d of July, he proposed that the entire revenue of the civil list, which produced about £.130,000 more than the £.700,000 granted to the late king, might be settled on his majesty during life. Although this motion was considered as the price of his continuance in office, yet no one ventured to oppose it, except Shippen, who after a long speech, moved, that no more than £.700,000 should be settled; but as

* Secret Intelligence from Paris, September 24th, 1727.—Walpole Papers.

† Journals.—Tindal, vol. 20. p. 4.—Historical Register, 172.—Chandler.

he was not seconded, the original motion passed without a division*. On the 9th, in consequence of a message requesting the house to settle a jointure on the queen, if she should survive the king; it was unanimously agreed that £.100,000 should be granted for that purpose. On the 17th, the king made a speech from the throne, in which, after thanking the parliament for this mark of attachment and affection, he gave another and a stronger sanction to the conduct of the ministers, and adverted to the flourishing state of the country. The parliament was then prorogued to the 29th of August, and soon afterwards dissolved. Thus was this short session of parliament conducted with an unanimity and zeal unexampled in the annals of this country.

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1727 to 1729.

As the same men were continued in office, of course the same measures were pursued both at home and abroad. At home, to continue the public tranquillity, to counteract the schemes of the Jacobites, to promote commerce, to encourage agriculture and manufactures were the great efforts of administration, and in these Walpole took an active and leading part. The new house of commons, which assembled on the 23d of January 1728, was of the same temper and disposition as the last; and the members in favour of administration were soon found to exceed the complement in the former parliament. Sir Spencer Compton, who had occupied the chair, having been created a peer, Arthur Onslow was elected speaker, with an unanimity which could only be inspired by an opinion of his integrity and abilities, an opinion which his subsequent conduct fully justified, by an able and impartial discharge of his duty, during a period of thirty-seven years†. The speech from the throne was remarkable for an appearance of frankness and sincerity. The king first alluded to the uncertain situation of affairs abroad, to the difficulties which had attended the execution of the preliminaries with Spain, and to the unavoidable necessity of not discontinuing warlike preparations; and then, after the ordinary professions of frugality, and willingness to reduce the national expences, exhorted the commons to take into consideration the encouragement of seamen in general, that they might be invited rather than compelled to enter into the service of their country,

Meeting of
the new par-
liament.

King's
speech.

* It is a curious observation of Smollett (vol. 2. p. 151.) which must tend to shew with how much partiality and inaccuracy he compiled his history. That "to these particulars (namely, in the speech of Shippen) which were indeed *unanswerable*, no reply was made. Even this mark of decency was laid aside, as idle and *superfluous*." The fact was, that no reply was made, not because the arguments were unanswerable, but because no one se-

conded the motion; a circumstance of which Smollett takes no notice. Belsham also observes (vol. 1. p. 172.) with no less inaccuracy, "The amendment was rejected *with a great majority*," which would lead the reader to suppose, that there was a division. But in fact, there was no amendment duly moved and seconded, and the original motion, of course, passed unanimously.

† Tindal.

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Address.

a consideration, he observed, worthy of the representatives of a people great and flourishing in trade and navigation. To this purpose, he proposed an addition to the fund of Greenwich Hospital, and concluded with recommending unanimity, zeal, and dispatch.

This speech was heard with general satisfaction. The address passed the lords without opposition; being presented to the commons for their approbation, Shippen proposed, with a view to cast a reflection on the ministers, after the words *disagreeable and uncertain state of affairs*, to add, *at his majesty's accession to the throne*. He then took occasion to launch out into the most bitter invectives, and particularly taxed the squadron with being useless and insignificant, for not having rifled the galleons at Carthage, and plundered Porto Bello. Sir William Wyndham seconded the motion with his usual energy, and observed, that the languid measures adopted by government, tended only to remove the negotiations from Paris and Madrid to Cambray, and would not assist in removing the difficulties into which this dilatory mode of proceeding had plunged the nation. But these declamatory objections did not accord with the temper of the house; they rather excited so much indignation among the independent members, that the opposition did not venture to call for a division, and the address was carried unanimously. In fact, this conduct of opposition, not only displeased the nation, but even hurt their cause in the only court, where it was likely to have any effect. For the great objection which cardinal Fleury had raised against the counsels of England, was derived from their precipitancy and violence; and Bolingbroke had laboured to impress this notion on his partizans. The ministers availed themselves of this circumstance, and in conformity to their instructions, earl Waldegrave, who in the absence of Horace Walpole conducted the affairs of England at Paris, represented with due effect to the cardinal, that the same measures to which he objected, as too prompt and decisive, were reprobated in England, as deficient in spirit and energy*.

Debate on
the Hessian
troops.
February 14.

The first question which met with much opposition, was that made by Horace Walpole, that £.230,923 should be granted for maintaining 12,000 Hessians in the British pay. In the debate on this motion, the minority seem to have first recovered from their surprise; the Pulteneys and Sir William Wyndham spoke with great weight and art on a question which has been so often discussed, and which still continues to agitate the public mind, concerning the expediency of taking foreign troops into British pay. The argument in favour of the question was, in substance, that the late king had thought fit to provide these troops, in order to obtain the ends of the

* George Tilson to earl Waldegrave, February 2d and 5th, 1727-8. Waldegrave Papers.

treaty of Hanover; that they were ready at hand, and much cheaper than raising national troops; that a disappointment, from the defection of the king of Prussia, one of the contracting parties in the alliance, was a special reason for their being retained; that time had manifested this to have been a prudential measure, it having prevented a war in Germany; that the reasons for taking them into pay still subsisted, and therefore their continuance was necessary till the intended congress at Cambray was finished. 84 divided against 280*.

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It was at this period, in which Walpole, confiding on the support of queen Caroline, took the lead in the administration, and became in reality the first minister, although lord Townshend still ostensibly retained the name, that the opposition began to form itself into consistency, and to compose a firm and compact phalanx, which resisted all the efforts and influence of the ministers to divide them, and which finally drove him from the helm.

The opposition.

Until the death of George the First, the component parts of this heterogeneous body, which consisted of a few disappointed Whigs, Tories, and Jacobites, did not cordially coalesce. Many of those Whigs and moderate Tories, who looked up to that event as a prelude to their own admission into the ministry, kept aloof from those who, as being professed Jacobites, or violent Tories, could not expect the same success. But no sooner had the continuance of Walpole in office annihilated their hopes, than the whole body became compact and united. In this respect, the Whigs became Tories, the Tories Whigs; and the Jacobites assumed every shape which tended to promote their views, by distressing government, and harassing the minister, whom they considered as the great supporter of the house of Brunswick.

The chief aim of the minister was to comprehend almost all the Tories as enemies to the government, by the name of Jacobites, or at least to give that stigma to every one who was not a professed and known Whig. With this view, his own administration being naturally supported on a Whig foundation, he endeavoured to attach to himself all those who had been dependent on Sunderland. With some he succeeded, but not with all; and of those whom he could not gain, several remained in their employments, because they were protected by the Hanover junto. This body of Whigs, small but of considerable eminence, remained his enemies to the time of the king's death, watching for every opportunity to ruin him; and from the accession of George the Second, commenced the opposition which became afterwards so troublesome and formidable†. Pulteney became the great leader of this

* Journals. Chandler.

† For the characters of the leading mem-

bers of opposition, see Onslow's Remarks, Correspondence, Period IV.

body;

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body; under him were ranged his kinsman Daniel Pulteney, Sir John Barnard, Sandys, and afterwards lord Polwarth, Pitt, Littleton, and the Grenvilles. Sir William Wyndham was the great chief of the Tories, and William Shippen was at the head of the Jacobites, who did not form less than fifty members. Those who supported the minister were lord Hervey, whose character and talents have been scandalously depreciated by Pope, Henry Pelham, Sir William Yonge, whom Johnson calls the best speaker in the house of commons, Winnington, and his brother Horace Walpole, whose talents for negotiation, indefatigable assiduity in business, and acquaintance with foreign transactions, rendered him an able co-adjutor.

Debates on
the sinking
fund and the
national debt.

During this session, a very important question, on the state of the national debt, was brought before the house, in which the minister of finance was deeply engaged. In the debates which took place on this subject, the opposition had declaimed against the profuse expenditure of the public money. They declared, that although large supplies were annually voted during the last reign, and the produce of the sinking fund had been applied to the discharge of the debt, during a period of almost uninterrupted tranquillity, yet the public burthens were *increased* instead of being diminished; and they observed, that if the war with Spain should continue, and new troubles arise in Europe, fresh taxes must be perpetuated to the latest posterity, and that the nation must inevitably sink under such an accumulated load.

In proof of these arguments, Pulteney had published a well written pamphlet, "On the State of the National Debt." Many similar statements had appeared in the Craftsman, attempting to shew, that the sinking fund had been of no service to the purpose for which it was originally intended. Walpole knew that this position was defended by the most able pens, and ostentatiously supported by numbers, and laborious calculations, which the people could not comprehend. As these assertions raised great clamours at home, and had a considerable effect abroad, in decrying the credit of the nation, it became necessary to confute, or at least to contradict them, in the same positive manner in which they were advanced. With this view, the minister determined, through the medium of the house of commons, to make a solemn appeal to the nation against their statements; and his resolution was unwittingly forwarded by opposition, who did not know that in repeating their attacks, they supplied him with the very weapons of defence, which he could not so easily have acquired without their concurrence.

February 22.

In laying before the commons an account of the sinking fund, Walpole declared, that since 1716, it had discharged above six millions of the debt, but that as new debts had been contracted, the national burthens had upon

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the balance been diminished about two millions and a half. Pulteney in reply asserted, that notwithstanding the great merit which some persons had arrogated to themselves from the establishment of the sinking fund, it appeared that the debt had *increased*, instead of being diminished, since the commencement of that pompous project. To this Sir Nathaniel Gould, an eminent merchant, observed, that he apprehended the gentleman had taken this notion from a treatise, intituled, "The State of the National Debt;" that if he understood any thing, it was numbers, and that he would stake his credit, to shew the fallacy of the author's calculations and inferences. Pulteney defended his calculations, and added, that he was not at present prepared to prove his assertions, but that he would do so in a few days, and would also stake his reputation on their truth. The minister supported the opinion of Sir Nathaniel Gould, and added, that he would also stake his reputation on the truth of what he advanced*. Walpole now exerted himself in preparing specific statements of the produce of the sinking fund, of the debts which had been liquidated, and of those which had been contracted since its establishment, with a view of submitting them to parliament on the first opportunity, which was soon supplied by the leading member of opposition.

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On the 29th of February, the king's answer was given to an address, requesting a specific account of £. 250,000 which had been charged for secret services; that he trusted the house would repose the same confidence in him as they had reposed in his royal father; and declared, that a specific account of the disbursements could not be given, without manifest prejudice to the public. This message had no sooner been delivered by Sir Paul Methuen, comptroller of the household, than Pulteney rose: with great animation he inveighed against such a vague and general way of accounting for the public money, as tending to render parliament insignificant and useless, to cover embezzlements, and to screen corrupt and rapacious ministers. He again urged the increase of the national debt, and insisted on having that important affair debated in a grand committee. The minister opposed the immediate discussion of the question, but moved to adjourn the debate only to the 4th of March, when after the examination of the revenue officers, he should be ready to lay before the house, the state of the national debt. This motion was carried by 202 against 66 †.

Accordingly, on the 4th of March, the commons, in a committee of the whole house, considered the state of the national debt, and examined at the bar the proper officers of the revenue. At the conclusion of this exami-

* George Tilson to the earl of Waldegrave, February 22d, 1727-8. Correspondence.—Chandler.

† Journals.

nation,

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nation, with a view to avoid all general cavils, and to reduce the assertions of the adversaries to a specific account, a motion was made by the friends of the minister, "That the monies already applied towards discharging the national debts incurred before Christmas 1716, together with £.220,435, which will be issued at Lady Day 1728, amount to £.6,648,762."

In reply to this proposition, the minority argued, that for the purpose of swelling the amount of the sums said to be issued for the liquidation of the debt, the minister had put down no less than three millions, which had been advanced in 1720, to make the irredeemables redeemables; and which could not properly be called a payment of debts. They also insisted, that he had omitted several large sums, particularly one million raised upon the credit of the civil list, and deficiencies of the land tax, malt, and other funds. They concluded, that these defalcations from the sums paid, and additions to the standing debts, would reduce the £.6,648,762, which, according to the boasts of the minister, was supposed to be liquidated, to less than one third.

Walpole, on the other hand, maintained with no less positiveness the accuracy of his own statements, expatiated on the state of the nation, and of the public debts, explained the operation and efficacy of the sinking fund, and supported the motion. The opposition then proposed that the speaker should resume the chair, but this being negatived by 250 against 97, the original question was then put, and carried without a division.

March 4th.

The minister having obtained this victory, resolved to bring forwards his public appeal to the nation, by presenting a report from the house of commons to the king, stating, in certain resolutions, the amount of the national debt, and the sums which had been liquidated by means of the sinking fund. With this view, four resolutions were submitted to a committee of the whole house, on the 8th of March; the first of which repeated, in the same words, the motion made on the 4th, that £.6,648,762 had been discharged.

The opposition, recollecting their former defeat by a large majority, and seeing that the house wholly differed from their representations, did not lay their wonted stress on the main question, but loudly called again upon the minister for an account of the sum lately employed in secret service. To these clamours Walpole made the usual reply, that it had been expended in negotiations too delicate to be specified. In the midst of his speech, an account was transmitted by lord Townshend, that the convention with Spain was signed at the Pardo*. Walpole availed himself of this information; and

* See the conclusion of this chapter.

acquainting the house with the news, added, "That the nation would be now relieved from the burthen of the late expences, and that he could assure the members who called so loudly for a specification of the secret service money, that it been expended in obtaining the conclusion of that peace, the preliminaries of which were now signed. The designs of those (he said) who had laboured to disturb the tranquillity of Europe, were thus defeated; and the purchase of peace, and the prevention of war, on terms so cheap, were highly beneficial to the public." This information spread general satisfaction through the house; the question was instantaneously called for, and the resolutions passed without a division *. On a subsequent meeting, these resolutions were formed into a report, which was drawn up by the minister, and laid before the house, to be presented to the king.

This is a very elaborate performance †, and deserves the strictest attention. After laying down the subject of the report, which was to examine how much of the additional debt incurred before the 25th of December 1716 had been discharged, and what new debts had been contracted since that time; it proceeds with making severe reflections against the arts which had been practised to mislead the people in this important inquiry, "by publishing and promoting, with the greatest industry, most notorious misrepresentations of the true state of our debts, and of the provisions made for the discharge of them; and by infusing groundless jealousies and insinuations, as if the produce of the sinking fund had been but little and inconsiderable, or that by wrong and imprudent measures, bad œconomy, neglect, or mismanagement, unnecessary expences had been made, and new debts contracted, that not only equalled, but exceeded by several millions, the amount of the old debts that had been discharged ‡." It then adopts a method that is plain, easy, and intelligible to the meanest capacity, by giving, in two tables, the amounts of the debts discharged and incurred since the 25th of December 1716, just before the establishment of the sinking fund:

Debts incurred since December 25th 1716, and since discharged	£.	s.	d.
— — — — —	6,626,404	16	9½
Debts contracted and incurred since December 25th 1716, and now subsisting	£.	s.	d.
— — — — —	3,927,988	7	1½
Difference, or decrease of the national debt	£.	s.	d.
— — — — —	2,698,416	9	7½

* Lettre de Monsieur Le Coq, au Roi de Pologne, de Londres, 23 Mars, 1728. Also, a letter from a foreign minister, dated 13 March, 1728. De la Faye to earl Walde-

grave, March 13, 1728. Correspondence, Period III.

† Tindal, vol. 20. p. 24.

‡ Journals.

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It then gives the new debts under the proper heads of the services for which they were contracted; and after having related the beginning, establishment, and beneficial effects of the sinking fund, observes, that by reducing the interest of the greatest part of the debts from 6 to 4 per cent, there is a saving of one third of the interest, which is equal to a discharge of one third of the principal; and that as the annual produce of the fund was gradually raised from £. 400,000 to £. 1,200,000, the addition of £. 800,000, if valued at twenty-five years purchase, the current price of annuities, would give a real profit to the public of £. 20,000,000.

It concludes by saying, "This is the happy state of the sinking fund, taken separately, and by itself; but, if we cast our eyes upon the state of our public credit in general, it must be an additional satisfaction to us, that by preserving the public faith inviolable, by the discharge of the old exchequer bills, and the reduction of the high interest on all our standing debts, the whole credit that is taken on the annual funds, for carrying on the current service of the year, is and may be supplied for the future at £. 3 per cent. or less, for interest, premium, and charges, by exchequer bills, just as the occasions of the public require, without any loans, or being obliged to any persons, for money to be advanced or lent on the credit of them; and so far is the public from being under the former necessities of allowing extravagant interest, premiums, or discounts, for any money they want, that the only contest now among the creditors of the public is, that every one of them desires to be the last in course of payment."

"Permit us then, most gracious sovereign, to congratulate your majesty on the comfortable prospect we have now before us, if, notwithstanding the many difficulties this nation has laboured under since the happy accession of your majesty's late royal father to the throne, notwithstanding the unnatural rebellion which soon after broke out, and the many heinous plots and conspiracies which have since been formed and carried on for overturning the religion and liberties of our country, and the protestant succession in your most illustrious family; the many disturbances which have arisen, and the uncertain and embroiled condition of the affairs of Europe, not a little fomented and encouraged by the false intelligence, and malicious insinuations which have been industriously spread abroad by your majesty's and our enemies, of the uneasy and perplexed state of our affairs at home, as if that had rendered it almost impossible for this nation, effectually to exert themselves in defence of their own just rights and possessions, and for establishing and securing the public peace and tranquillity; if, notwithstanding these and many other difficulties which we laboured under, and while the sinking fund

was yet in its infancy, and so much less than it now is, we have been able to diminish the national debts so much already, what may we not hope for in regard to a more speedy and sensible discharge of them for the future, now the sinking fund is so greatly increased, and our public credit in so flourishing a condition *."

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Such was the substance of this remarkable report, which was carried by 243 against 77 †. It was presented to the king, and drew a favourable answer, expressing his extreme satisfaction for the removal of groundless jealousies and apprehensions, for the happy effects to be derived from the flourishing state of public credit, for the provision made for the gradual discharge of the national debt, and concluded by observing, "You may be assured, it shall be my particular care and study to maintain and preserve the public credit, and to improve the sinking fund, and to avoid all occasions of laying any new burthens upon the people ‡."

April 8th.

April 11th.

The effects of the report, both at home and abroad, were incalculably beneficial to the credit of the minister. Whatever were the opinions of individuals, whatever might be the cavils of those who opposed government, the statement of the minister was approved by more than *two thirds of the national representatives, assembled in parliament, and was solemnly sanctioned by the king*. At home the discontents visibly subsided; abroad the national credit was established on stronger grounds than ever. It was proved, in opposition to the clamours of the disaffected, that the kingdom could support the expences of a war. France courted our alliance with redoubled ardour; Spain was confirmed in her wishes for peace; the Emperor and Russia shrunk from a contest with Great Britain; and the dispatches from Paris, Seville, and Vienna, sufficiently announced the weight and influence which the counsels of England had gained by the opinion, which now generally prevailed in favour of her finances.

In this session occurred one of those difficult and critical cases, in which Walpole was reduced to the necessity of complying with the will of the sovereign, contrary to his own judgment, or of resigning. Great complaints had been made of the deficiency of the civil list, and upon an examination of the revenue officers, a motion was made by Scrope, secretary to the treasury, that the sum of £. 115,000 be granted to his majesty, not as a deficiency, but as an arrear. It appeared that there was no deficiency, yet the house rejected a motion for a secret committee, and passed the act, by a majority of 241 against 115. In the lords, the bill met with strenuous op-

April 23d.

* Journals.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

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The king's
disgust
against
Charles
Stanhope.

position, and though carried, very strong protests were entered on the Journals, and signed by fourteen peers. This transaction gave great pain to Walpole: he is said to have used every effort of address and reasoning to dissuade the prosecution of the demand, so much as even to offend the king. The enemies of his administration were not ignorant of his resistance, and some of the leading Tories made secret proposals to the king, that if he would discard Walpole, they would not only obtain the sum required, but add to it £.100,000. Thus circumstanced, the minister reluctantly complied, and subjected his character to much obloquy*.

This inflexibility of George the Second exposed Walpole not only to many difficulties in his public career, but to many unmerited reproaches in his character, as a man of veracity. Great embarrassment to a minister must be derived from the occasional reluctance of the sovereign to confirm the promises made to individuals of particular offices, either of honour or trust; and on such occasions, he naturally incurs the blame of either indifference, negligence, or duplicity. Thus he had not been able to obtain for his friend the duke of Devonshire the presidentship of the council, which high office was, by the interposition of Sunderland, conferred on lord Carleton, who, since his elevation to the peerage, had seldom voted with the Whigs.

But perhaps no failure affected him more, or caused more reproaches, than the refusal of the sovereign to make Charles Stanhope, elder brother of the earl of Harrington, a lord of the admiralty. The real cause of the king's non-compliance, arose from his aversion to Charles Stanhope, which was disclosed to the minister, under the strictest injunctions of secrecy. George the Second had found, among his father's papers and letters, a memorial from lord Sunderland, written in the hand of Charles Stanhope, highly expressive of strong dislike to the prince of Wales, and recommending the adoption of the most violent measures against him. The perusal of this paper excited the highest indignation as well against the memory of lord Sunderland, as against the secretary who had written it. In regard to Charles Stanhope, the king declared, that no consideration should induce him to assign to him any place of trust or honour; and he kept his word. For when Sir Robert Walpole espoused his interest with much ardour, he offended the king, who rejected the application, with some expressions of resentment against the minister for having recommended him†.

* Journals. Chandler. Tindal. Etough's Papers.—Geo. I. p. 16, 17.

† Lord Townshend to Stephen Poyntz, June 3d, 1728. Correspondence, Period IV.

When

When George the First left England, things wore the appearance of a general pacification. In virtue of the preliminaries signed by the Imperial and Spanish ambassadors, a courier from Spain was hourly expected to announce, that the siege of Gibraltar was raised, and the prizes restored. But the death of the king put a momentary suspension to these hopes.

Philip received the preliminaries on the 10th of June, and before he issued orders in conformity with his promises, the news of that event arrived. The accession of the new sovereign had been announced by the Jacobites abroad, as likely to meet with numerous obstacles, and at all events, it was supposed that the helm of government would not be directed by so steady a hand, when Townshend and Walpole were removed. Under these impressions, Philip, inspired with the hopes of breaking the strict alliance between France and England, and of again engaging the Emperor in his support, while he affected to agree to the terms accepted by his ambassador, delayed, under various pretences, to raise the siege of Gibraltar, and to restore the Prince Frederick, a ship belonging to the South Sea company, which had been seized under the pretence of carrying on a contraband trade.

The Emperor justified this conduct, by declaring, that the king of Spain was not obliged by the preliminaries to take those steps; and by his preparations, gave unequivocal signs of intentions hostile to England. The only method therefore of bringing Philip to reason, was to attack his ally in Germany, and to pursue such vigorous measures as might deter the court of Vienna from supporting Spain by invading the electorate and the United Provinces, the only parts in which the allies of Hanover were vulnerable, and which the English would be bound in honour to defend. This measure was still more necessary, because the conventions made by the Emperor with the electors and princes of the empire, and the subsidies which he was to pay with Spanish money, in virtue of those conventions, were not expired. The allies were, by the management of the courts of Vienna and Madrid, in the same state of uncertainty as to peace or war, as they were before the preliminaries were signed.

Among all these conventions made by the Emperor, none had a more fatal tendency than that with Brunswick Wolfenbittel. The Emperor had already drawn the electors of Mentz, Cologne, Treves, and Bavaria, and the Elector Palatine, into his interest. His near consanguinity to the prince of Saxony, seemed to secure to him, at least, the neutrality of that protestant electorate; and he had found means to draw off the king of Prussia, by the promise of guarantying to him the succession of Berg and Ravenstein. In case

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affairs.Wavering
conduct of
Spain.Treaty with
Brunswick.

of

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of a rupture, he had secured Mentz as a place of arms, which gave him the command of Suabia, Franconia, and the Rhine.

The Elector of Mentz had already permitted him to put a garrison into Erfurt, which, by its situation, made him in effect master of Upper Saxony: but still Lower Saxony, in which circle the dominions of Hanover are situated, remained inaccessible, till he found means to make a treaty with the duke of Brunswick Wolfenbittel, by which he was to grant that prince a subsidy of £.200,000 florins a year. In a secret article of that treaty, it was farther stipulated, that the conjuncture of affairs requiring it, closer engagements should be entered into between them, as well for augmenting the duke's subsidies and troops, as in relation to the town of Brunswick. In consequence of this convention, another subsidiary treaty was opened between the court of Russia and the duke, under the influence and direction of the Emperor. Had he been permitted to garrison Brunswick, not only a fatal disunion would have been produced between the branches of the king's family, but the situation of that place would have enabled the Emperor to pour into the electorate his own troops, as well as the 30,000 men which, by the treaty with Russia, were to have been introduced into the empire, under pretence of recovering Sleswick for the duke of Holstein; the greater part of Westphalia would have been laid under contribution, even to the frontiers of Holland; and the kings of Denmark and Sweden would have been kept in awe, by being forced to provide for the safety of their own possessions on the side of Germany.

In this dangerous situation of affairs, when the king's German dominions, and through them the United Provinces, were threatened by the combined arms of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, and when the possession of Brunswick, as a place of arms for the allies of Vienna, would have enabled the Emperor to penetrate into Lower Saxony, and bring on a general war, a treaty was negotiated and concluded with the duke of Brunswick Wolfenbittel, which put an instant check to the views of the Emperor, and to the hopes of Spain. This treaty, negotiated between lord Townshend and count Dehn, the confidential minister of the duke of Brunswick, was signed at Wolfenbittel, on the 23d of November 1727. It stipulated a renewal of the family compact, according to the treaty of the 6th of May 1661, by which Brunswick was to be kept for the common safety of the house of Lunenburgh, and not delivered up to any other power; a mutual guaranty of dominions; mutual assistance in case of attack; a subsidy of £.25,000 a year, during four years, to the duke of Brunswick, who was to furnish at least 5,000 men. This treaty, if considered in its general effects and tendency to the pacification of Germany, was a master-piece of policy: it united the two branches of the house of Lunenburgh, who had been long at variance; and by

by preventing the progress of the Imperial arms, saved the electorate of Hanover from hostile inroads.

These prudent and vigorous measures had the effect for which they were designed. The Emperor was reduced to a state of inaction; and Spain, unable to maintain an unequal contest with the allies of Hanover, submitted with reluctance, and ratified the preliminaries of peace at the Pardo, a royal palace near Madrid, in conformity to a declaration settled between Horace Walpole and cardinal Fleury, and made by count Rothembourg, the French minister in Spain. In consequence of this act, the congress of Soissons was held, where the plenipotentiaries of all the powers concerned in the late troubles were assembled; and although nothing material was transacted, yet the negotiations were managed, on the part of the Hanover allies, in such a manner as to create a division between the courts of Vienna and Madrid. The project of a provisional treaty, negotiated between the Imperial, British, and French plenipotentiaries, had so alarmed the king of Spain, and created so much uneasiness in the queen, that they required from the Emperor a positive declaration on the subject of marrying the two archduchesses to the two Infants of Spain, and his refusal to explain himself, excited their resentment to such a degree, as to give England and France an opportunity of detaching them from the Emperor.

The breach being now made, a reconciliation speedily took place between the allies of Hanover and Spain. Philip sacrificed the Emperor, as the Emperor, by declining to co-operate in the siege of Gibraltar, had sacrificed him, signed the preliminaries at Pardo, and concluded, at Seville, the 29th of November, with Great Britain and France, a treaty of peace, union, and mutual defence. This treaty, besides the restoration of peace, and the renewal of all former treaties between Great Britain and Spain, stipulated the introduction of six thousand Spaniards, instead of neutral troops, as specified by the quadruple alliance, into Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia, for securing to Don Carlos the eventual succession to those duchies, in case the reigning sovereigns should die without issue male; and if the Emperor would not acquiesce, forcible means were to be used for effectuating the introduction.

In return for this single article granted to Spain, Great Britain obtained immediate redress of some grievances, the promise of redress in others, new guaranties of all her possessions, and of all her rights of trade, and a tacit exclusion of any claim to Gibraltar, upon which to be silent, after the clamorous demands made by Spain, was the same as a public renunciation*.

* The contents of the part of this chapter which relates to foreign affairs, have been principally drawn from the various dispatches of Horace Walpole and William Stanhope, in

the Walpole and Stanhope papers, and from the state of the negotiation, from June 1728 to June 1730, drawn up by Mr. Robinson, the minister at Vienna, in the Grantham papers.

Although

Chapter 33.
1727 to 1729.

Act of the
Pardo.

Treaty of
Seville.

1729.

Period IV.
1727 to 1730.
Walpole
promotes the
peace.

Although Walpole suffered the negotiations to be ostensibly managed by Townshend, and seemed to take no part in the various transactions, yet he watched with a jealous eye the progress of the business. In the secret correspondence which he constantly held with his brother Horace, whose opinion had a great influence over Townshend, he directed all his advice and views to the final establishment of peace. He was on the one hand equally studious not to offend the Emperor beyond hopes of recovery, who he well knew, in case of a reconciliation between France and Spain, could alone in future prevent the aggrandisement of the house of Bourbon, and on the other side, was equally anxious to facilitate an accommodation with Spain, for the sake of restoring the British commerce, which had received a deep blow from the rupture with that country. The treaty of Seville, was indeed principally owing to his interference or directions; and Townshend's repugnance to this plan of pacification, was over-ruled by the prudence and discretion of his colleague.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH:

1727—1729.

Debates in Parliament on a supposed Promise of George the First to restore Gibraltar to Spain.—Mistakes generally entertained on that Subject.—True State of Facts.—Conduct of the Regent.—Of the King and Queen of Spain, and its Consequences.

Parliamentary proceedings respecting Gibraltar.

IN the midst of these transactions, an outcry was raised against administration, for having degraded the king, and disgraced the nation, by breaking a promise made to Philip the Fifth, for the restitution of Gibraltar, which, it was urged, had induced that monarch to accede to the quadruple alliance; and therefore the war was unjust on the part of England, because he only claimed his right in virtue of that promise, and offered to commence a negotiation for peace, when it was fulfilled. To these assertions Walpole replied, that the promise having been given when he was not in administration, he was in no respect answerable for it; but that

if

if it had ever been made, he durst aver, that it was conditional, and rendered void by the refusal of Spain to comply with the terms on which it was founded, and that whenever the performance of that agreement was mentioned to him, he always maintained that Gibraltar should not be granted without the consent of parliament *. When Sandys moved, "for addressing the king to communicate to this house, copies of the declaration, letter, or engagement, on which the king of Spain founded his peremptory demand for the restitution of that fortress," he was seconded, and strenuously supported by Sir William Wyndham, Hungerford, and Pulteney, who took notice of a letter written in 1721, to one of the Emperor's plenipotentiaries at Cambray, wherein a promise of ceding Gibraltar was expressly mentioned; but they were opposed by Henry Pelham, Brodrick, Horace Walpole, and Sir Robert Walpole, who said, that the communication of the declaration or letter was altogether impracticable and unprecedented; the private letters of princes being almost as sacred as their very persons †.

But although this remark at that time imposed a respectful silence on the house of commons, yet the question was again revived in the upper house, and the letter being produced, some of the lords in opposition moved the resolution, "That effectual care be taken, in the treaty then in agitation, that the king of Spain do renounce all claims and pretensions to Gibraltar and Minorca, in plain and strong terms." But the motion being overruled, another was carried, "That the house resolve upon the king for preserving the undoubted right to Gibraltar and Minorca." This resolution being sent down to the commons, lord Malpas proposed and carried an address to a copy of the letter to the king of Spain; which being laid before the house, a warm debate ensued. Many severe reflections were levelled at those who advised the king to write such a letter, as implied, or at least was considered by the Spaniards as signifying a positive promise of giving up Gibraltar, and was therefore the principal occasion of the king of Spain's resentment, and of the difficulties in promoting a pacification. To these insinuations, Walpole replied as on the former occasion, and added, that the letter did not contain any positive promise; and that effectual care had been taken in the present negotiation to secure the possession of Gibraltar. But the party in opposition declaring themselves dissatisfied with this explanation and answer, moved an addition to the resolution of the lords, that all pretensions on the part of Spain to Gibraltar and Minorca, should be specifically given up; but the

Chapter 34.
1727 to 1729.

February 6,
1727.

March 18
1727.

March 21.
February 1.

* Chandler.

† Chandler, vol. 6. p. 384.

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1727 to 1730.

Errors of historians.

question being negatived by a large majority of 156 voices, the resolution of the lords was carried without a division. Thus ended this business in parliament, which had created so much ill-will, and occasioned so many false reports at the time, and which has since been misrepresented by those who inculpate the minister for breaking a promise which he never made, and for violating the national honour, when, in fact, he defended and supported it.

Although the business was thus concluded in parliament, yet the assertions of the minister did not satisfy opposition, and as the affair was again renewed in the *Craftsman*, and other periodical publications, with increased rancour and exaggerated invective, to which Walpole never condescended to make any reply, these invectives have been adopted by subsequent historians with no less asperity, and have been considered as authentic facts. Nor is this misrepresentation confined to the authors of this country: Many of the French writers are totally mistaken in the account of this negotiation, in asserting, that George the First promised unconditionally to restore Gibraltar.

Thus, particularly, Anquetil presumes, that in the peace which Spain concluded with France and England in 1720, there was a secret article by which the king of England promised to restore Gibraltar to Spain; and he grounds this presumption, not unfairly, on the two following passages from the *Memoirs of Villars*. March 10, 1727: The pope's nuncio at Madrid, wrote to the nuncio in France, that the king of Spain offered to agree to the suspension of the trade from Ostend, and at the same time demanded Gibraltar, insisting that the restitution of it had been promised by the king of England. November 2, 1727: Count Rothembourg, the French ambassador at Madrid, relates, that the queen of Spain complained of the English, and speaking of Gibraltar, took out an original letter from the king's cabinet, in which George the First promised the restitution of Gibraltar *. As therefore the accounts given of this transaction are in general erroneous, and as the inquiry itself is not uninteresting, I shall state a narrative of the negotiations relative to the restitution of Gibraltar, drawn from authentic documents.

Correct statement of the fact.

In 1715, George the First, for the purpose of avoiding a rupture with Spain, gave full powers to the regent, duke of Orleans, to offer the restoration of Gibraltar; the hostilities which followed, annulled the promise, and afterwards the king of Spain acceded purely and simply to the quadruple alliance, without stipulating the cession. The regent, however, with a view to ingratiate himself with the king of Spain, and to promote the double marriage between the two infants and his two daughters, repeatedly renewed

* Vol. 2. p. 411. See also Belsham's History, vol. 1. p. 251.

the offer in the name of George the First, and inspired Philip with the most sanguine hopes of recovering so important a fortress. These expectations being urged by Philip with great warmth, and with little discretion, obliged the king to declare that he did not consider himself as bound by his former conditional promise. The regent being reproached by the queen of Spain with a breach of his word, dispatched the count de Saneterre to England, to represent the danger and delicacy of his situation. He declared, that he considered the king's promise as full and positive, and that he would as soon consent to his utter ruin, as to the dishonour of failing in so public an engagement. These strong expressions from the regent, who had proved himself so faithful an ally, and whose assistance in discovering and counteracting the schemes of the Jacobites was so necessary, perplexed the king, and induced him to use his utmost endeavours to gratify him and the king of Spain. With this view, earl Stanhope founded the disposition of the upper house, by insinuating an intention to obtain a bill, empowering the king to dispose of Gibraltar, for the advantage of the nation. But this hint produced a violent ferment. The public were roused with indignation on the simple suspicion, that at the close of a successful war, unjustly begun by Spain, so important a fortress should be ceded. General murmurs were at the same time excited by a report industriously circulated by opposition, that the king had entered into a positive engagement for that purpose; virulent pamphlets were published to alarm the people, and to persuade them rather to continue the war, than to give up Gibraltar. The ministers were compelled to yield to the torrent, and to adopt the prudent resolution of waving the motion, lest it should produce a contrary effect, by a bill, which might for ever tie * up the king's hands. The interference of France in this affair, and the extreme eagerness to obtain the restitution, was of great detriment.* The alarm was indeed so strong, that suspicions were entertained that the regent was meditating the desertion of the alliance with England, and made Gibraltar a pretext to justify a change of system. These apprehensions induced the king to send earl Stanhope to Paris, with a view of representing the true situation of affairs, and to state the unpopularity of the measure, and the impracticability of carrying it against the general sense of the people. The letter which Stanhope conveyed from the king to the regent on this occasion, was firm, discreet, and satisfactory. He acknowledged that he had made the offer of ceding Gibraltar, solely with a view

March 9,
1720.

* Earl Stanhope to Sir Luke Schaub, Paris, March 28, 1720. Hardwicke Papers.

Period IV.
1727 to 1730.

of preventing the rupture, and that Spain might have obtained it, had she then acceded to the proposed conditions. But it was now too late to revive the demand, as the king of Spain had proved himself the aggressor. It never could be understood that a voluntary offer of this nature, to prevent a war, was binding as a preliminary of peace. He concluded by observing, that he had never given his consent, since the rupture, to the renewal of the offer, and had received no communication from the regent of any intention to bring it forward*. The duke of Orleans was fully satisfied with this representation. He owned, that although he could not avoid continuing to press for the restitution which he had so solemnly promised in the king's name, yet that he would employ every indirect means in his power, to prevent its being indiscreetly and improperly urged, and testified his resolution to make a separate peace with Spain.

Equivalent
proposed.

October 1,
1720.

Rejected by
the king of
Spain.

The king, however, being still inclined to gratify the regent, if he could do it without disobliging his subjects, referred the object of dispute to the congress at Cambray, hoping that in the course of negotiations, the Spanish plenipotentiaries might urge such motives and arguments in its favour, as would influence the parliament and people†. Under the same impressions, he made another effort. By his order, earl Stanhope wrote to secretary Craggs, to lay before the lords justices the advantages which would result from ceding Gibraltar for Florida, or the eastern part of St. Domingo, and for certain commercial advantages. This proposal being laid before the council, lord Townshend at first warmly opposed, but finally agreed, if a suitable equivalent, particularly Florida, could be obtained. Accordingly, the session seemed ultimately determined, if it met with the approbation of parliament. But the obstinacy of the king of Spain, rendered this proposal ineffectual. He declined yielding Florida in exchange, and insisted on Gibraltar without giving any equivalent‡. This claim on his part was so warmly, and repeatedly insisted on, as the indispensable requisite for acceding to the terms of pacification, that it was deemed a prudent art of policy not to retard the conclusion of peace, by a positive denial. Philip having requested, as an ostensible vindication of the peace, which was reprobated in Spain as highly dishonourable, a letter conveying a promise of restoring Gibraltar, George the First complied, and expressed himself with great discretion on this delicate subject. "I no longer balance (he observed) to assure your

The king's
letter.

* The king to the duke of Orleans. Walpole Papers.

† Sir Luke Schaub to Grimaldo, Madrid, June 17, 1720. Hardwicke Papers.

‡ Secretary Craggs to earl Stanhope, August 2 and 26, 1720. Stanhope Papers. Earl Stanhope to secretary Craggs, Hanover, October 1, 1720. Hardwicke Papers.

majesty

majesty of my readiness to satisfy you with regard to your demand, touching the restitution of Gibraltar, *upon the footing of an equivalent*, promising you to make use of the first favourable opportunity to regulate this article, with consent of my parliament." When the British minister delivered this letter, both the king and queen of Spain made so many objections, particularly to the word equivalent, that at his suggestion the king consented to write another letter, in which those words were omitted, under the full conviction that the letter, even in that mutilated state, left the affair entirely to the parliament, who might refuse to part with Gibraltar upon any terms; or if they agreed to the cession, might equally insist upon an equivalent*.

This was the memorable letter †, which was the cause of so much obloquy. Philip considered it as a positive promise, and his minister insisted upon a pure and simple restitution, without any equivalent. The king of England, on the contrary, asserted that the cession must solely depend on the consent of parliament, which would not be easily obtained. In the midst of these claims on one side, and counter declarations on the other, which agitated the plenipotentiaries during two years, the dissolution of the marriage between Louis the Fifteenth and the Infanta, occasioned the rupture between France and Spain. Philip broke up the congress at Cambray without having agreed to the preliminaries, and the question of Gibraltar remained undecided. After ineffectually endeavouring to detach England from France, and whilst he was secretly preparing for a reconciliation with the house of Austria, he renewed his claims, and accompanied them with bitter reproaches.

In the midst of these altercations, Ripperda, having publicly declared at Vienna that England would be compelled to restore Gibraltar, colonel Stanhope was commanded to obtain an immediate acknowledgment from Madrid, whether this declaration of Ripperda was made by order, or simply on his own authority ‡. The king of Spain, and his first minister Grimaldo, both replied, that Ripperda had surpassed his orders, in saying that a rupture with England would ensue, unless Gibraltar was restored; and Stanhope was desired to acquaint his court with this declaration. Stanhope prepared his dispatch, and the courier was on the point of taking his departure,

* Dispatch from William Stanhope to lord Carteret, Aranjuez, May 29, 1721. Hardwicke Papers.

† This letter is printed in the Journals of the lords and commons, in the Political State

of Europe, Historical Register, Chandler, and Tindal, with an omission of the words marked in Italics.

‡ Letter from Colonel Stanhope to lord Townshend, July 14, 1725.

Chapter 34.
1727 to 1729.

April 29,
1721.

June 1, 1721.

Haughty and unreasonable conduct of the king of Spain.

when

Period IV.
1727 to 1730.

when he received a letter from Grimaldo, informing him that the continuation of the friendship and commerce between England and Spain, would depend on the speedy compliance with this demand. On inquiry, he found that the cause of this sudden change in opinion, proceeded from the news just brought of the ratification of the treaty of Vienna. In fact, both the king and queen of Spain were so little acquainted with the constitution and temper of the English nation, that they insisted on an *immediate* restitution of Gibraltar as the only means of avoiding a rupture. Against this extraordinary demand, Stanhope remonstrated in an audience with the king and queen of Spain; he declared, that they insisted upon an impossibility, since what they required could not be effected without consent of parliament; whereas there was then no parliament assembled, nor could possibly be assembled, before the king's return to England in the spring. "No," said the queen, "Let then the king your master return presently into England, and call a parliament expressly for this purpose, it being no more than what we might expect from his friendship for us; and I am assuredly and positively informed, that the matter once fairly proposed, would not meet with one negative in either house: let this short argument be once made use of; either give up Gibraltar, or your trade to the Indies and Spain, and the matter, I will answer for it, won't admit of a moment's debate *."

Its consequences.

The consequence of this insolent and peremptory demand being a refusal on the part of England, Philip commenced the siege of Gibraltar, and alleged as an excuse for the aggression, the breach of promise on the side of George the First. When the desertion of the Emperor compelled him to accept the preliminaries of peace, he clogged the negotiation by renewing his claims on Gibraltar, and furnished the opposition in England with matter of reproach to the minister, who justified himself in parliament. The object of Philip was to bring the dispute before the congress of Soissons; that of the English plenipotentiaries was to prevent it. The prudent manner in which they succeeded in that design, does honour to their diplomatic abilities; and the treaty of Seville was, as I have already observed, concluded without any stipulation or mention of Gibraltar.

* Letter from W. Stanhope to lord Townshend, August 6, 1725. Stanhope and Harrington Papers.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH:

Chapter 35.

1728.

1728.

*Rise, Disgrace, Imprisonment, Escape, and Arrival of Ripperda in England.—
Reception and Conferences with the Ministers.—Dissatisfaction and Departure.
—Enters into the Service of the Emperor of Morocco.*

THE arrival of the duke of Ripperda in England, his clandestine reception, and temporary concealment under the protection of Townshend and Walpole, form a remarkable event in this year. The papers committed to my inspection, contain several curious particulars of this extraordinary man, who negotiated the treaty of Vienna, and who afterwards betrayed the secret articles to the court of London.

Ripperda in
England.

William, baron and duke of Ripperda, was descended from a noble family in the lordship of Groningen, one of the United Provinces; he received a learned education, and acquired an intimate knowledge of the French, Spanish, and Latin languages. He served as colonel during the war of the Spanish succession. In the midst of his military occupations, he applied himself with indefatigable industry to the study of trade and manufactures; and being no less distinguished for his insinuating address, was deputed, soon after the peace of Utrecht, envoy to Madrid, for the purpose of settling the complicated commercial disputes between Spain and the Dutch republic. While he was labouring to adjust that difficult business, contributed to promote the conclusion of a commercial treaty between Spain and England, for which service Townshend commends his good offices in terms of high approbation*.

Memoirs of
Ripperda.

Envoy to
Madrid.
1715.

During his residence at Madrid, his ardent imagination, consummate address, and extreme facility in writing dispatches and drawing memorials in various languages, recommended him to cardinal Alberoni, who employed him in affairs of a most secret and delicate nature. The services which he performed, and the grateful acknowledgments of the minister, inspired him with the most sanguine expectation of obtaining a splendid situation in a country where, since the accession of a foreign king, aliens had been frequently promoted to the highest offices of government; and as Alberoni alledged as an excuse that he could not be promoted on account of his religion, he made a public abjuration, and was admitted into the Roman catholic church. He was then appointed superintendant of a cloth manufactory,

Noticed by
Alberoni.

Changes his
religion, and
settles in
Spain.

* Townshend Papers.

recently

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recently established, by his own suggestion, at Guadalaxara, and received the grant of a pension and an estate. During this period of his life, he was pensioned by the Emperor, and seems to have received occasional presents from the English court. He was so unprincipled, that he had even the assurance to call upon the envoy Bubb, afterwards Doddington, for 14,000 pistoles, in the name of cardinal Alberoni, which he appropriated to his own use*, and this transaction probably contributed to his removal. Having brought the manufactory to a high degree of improvement, and enjoying frequent opportunities of conversing with the king and queen, he excited the jealousy of Alberoni, and was removed from the superintendence. Ripperda, however, dissembled his resentment, while he still continued in public on terms of amity with the prime minister, secretly represented to Daubenton and Grimaldo, who were disgusted with Alberoni, many errors and instances of mal-administration, which the confessor laid before the king, and persuaded him to consult Grimaldo, through the channel of the postmaster-general.

In the course of the difficult and complicated transactions in which Spain was involved with the Emperor, France, and England, the opinion of Ripperda was also demanded. He accordingly drew up a report, in which he declared, that the king could never succeed in his designs against the Emperor, unless he could obstruct the operations of England. With this view, he recommended that the troops destined to invade Sicily, should be landed, with great stores of arms and ammunition, on the coasts of Scotland or Ireland, to assist in replacing the Pretender on the throne. If that event should take place, the prince would in gratitude restore Gibraltar, Minorca, Jamaica, and all the American settlements wrested from Spain by the English, and the Italian provinces would be easily recovered. This advice, though rejected by the influence of Alberoni, who persevered in the reduction of Sicily, made a deep impression on the king's mind, and gave him a favourable opinion of Ripperda's genius and spirit, which was increased, when the repeated predictions of Ripperda, that the rash and ill-concerted measures of Alberoni would fail, were verified by the event. The disgrace of the cardinal being the consequence of his ill success, the superintendancy of the manufactures at Guadalaxara was restored to Ripperda, and his influence over the king and queen was promoted by the strong recommendations which the duchess of Parma, at the suggestions of the Imperial court, made in his favour, to her daughter the queen of Spain, and by the orders given to marquis Scotti, the minister of Parma at Madrid, to serve as a channel of communication between him and the queen. Hence Ripperda obtained private audiences of the king and queen of Spain, in which he laid

* Stanhope's Dispatches; Harrington Papers.

down plans for the improvement of trade, and the increase of the marine; flattered the queen with promoting the aggrandisement of her family, and still more ingratiated himself in her favour, by proposing the marriage of Don Carlos with an archduchess.

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1728.

Depending on her protection, he aimed at the ministry of state, of the marine and the Indies; he had even disposed the king to remove the ministers, when Scotti betrayed the secret to Daubenton and Grimaldo. Daubenton prevented the immediate appointment of Ripperda, by representing the danger and impropriety of entrusting the administration to a new convert; and when the death of Daubenton, and the offer of a cardinal's hat to the new confessor, father Bermudas, seemed likely to facilitate his elevation, his expectations were annihilated by the abdication of Philip. During the short reign of Louis, the queen maintained the same private correspondence, and followed his advice, in sending large sums of money and her jewels to Parma.

His ambitious views.

Soon after Philip's resumption of the crown, when the cabinet of Madrid formed a project of reconciliation with the Emperor, Ripperda was selected as the fittest person to carry that delicate negotiation into execution. He was accordingly deputed to Vienna, with secret instructions to make a peace with the Emperor, to conclude a marriage between Don Ferdinand and the second archduchess, and to secure, on the death of the Emperor without issue male, the Italian provinces and the Netherlands to Spain, and the reversion of Tuscany and Parma to Don Carlos. Before his departure, he delivered in a project for preparing a fleet of 100 ships, an army of 100,000 infantry, and 30,000 horse. The expences he proposed to discharge from the revenues of the Indies alone, by new modelling the trade to the settlements, and securing the profits, which were almost totally absorbed by the English and French nations, and the Spanish ministers. He also undertook to save an annual sum of 10,000,000 crowns; and obtained from the king a promise, that on his return from Vienna, he should be appointed prime minister to carry his project into execution.

Mission to the Emperor.

Ripperda performed the object of his mission with great address. He departed from Spain in the latter end of October, and arrived at Vienna in November, where he resided in the suburbs, under the fictitious name of the baron of Pfaffenberg. It does not appear that the English court had any notice of his arrival from St. Saphorin, their agent at Vienna, before the 18th of February; when he received intelligence from Petkum, minister of the duke of Holstein, that a Dutchman, the description of whose person answered to that of Ripperda, held long and secret conferences with count Zinzendorf by night. This man was soon discovered to be Ripperda; but all the information which St. Saphorin could procure concerning the object of his

Concludes the treaty of Vienna.

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1727 to 1730.

mission, amounted to no more than a conjecture, that a marriage between an archduchess and an infant of Spain, was the subject of their conferences; but whether with the prince of Asturias or Don Carlos, was a matter of which he was wholly ignorant.

Ripperda was anxious to finish the objects of his mission, that he might return to Spain, and obtain those honours which awaited him; but with a view to render the queen of Spain more tractable, he changed his instructions, and proposed that the eldest archduchess should be given to her son, Don Carlos, and that Mademoiselle de Beaujolois, who had been affianced to him, should be transferred to the prince of Asturias. The queen instantly approved and promoted a plan so congenial to her wishes, by which the imperial dignity, and the hereditary dominions of the house of Austria, would devolve on her issue. Having thus secured the queen of Spain, he gained the court of Vienna, by affirming, that if he was placed at the helm of government in Spain, a saving would be made of 50,000,000 crowns, out of which five or six millions should be annually remitted to Vienna. He accordingly received a verbal, if not a written promise, from count Zinzendorf, in the name of the Emperor, that the eldest archduchess should be affianced to Don Carlos.

While this business was in agitation, the dissolution of the marriage between the infanta and Louis the Fifteenth, and the refusal of England to accept the sole mediation, excited the resentment of the king and queen of Spain to such a degree, that instant orders were transmitted to Vienna, for concluding the treaty on any terms. Ripperda found no difficulty from the Emperor.

Under these auspices, Ripperda concluded the treaty of Vienna; the news of which, on reaching Madrid, inspired the king and queen with the most extravagant joy, and the populace, delighted at their deliverance from French interference, shouted, "Long live the august house of Austria *." Count Konigseck, deputed ambassador to Madrid, was received with the most flattering marks of esteem and consideration, and soon acquired such an ascendancy, that he wholly governed the counsels of Spain.

The secrecy with which the whole negotiation was conducted, was so well maintained, that the contents of the treaty, which was signed on the 21st of May, were scarcely suspected, until they were hinted at by the Emperor himself, who could not contain his joy on the occasion, and then divulged by the Imperial ministers, with a view to insult and intimidate the cabinet of England. The veil of secrecy being now removed, Ripperda came forth in the public character of ambassador from Spain. The splendour of his household, the liberality of his donations, and the punctuality of his payments, attracted esteem and secured popularity. He at the same time displayed the

* Count Staremberg to the Emperor, June 8, 1725. Harrington Papers.

natural

natural warmth and presumption of his temper. He poured forth, in public companies, the most bitter invectives against England, and made repeated declarations, that a refusal to give up Gibraltar, or to guaranty the engagements recently concerted between the two contracting powers, would be followed by an immediate attempt to assist the Pretender.

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Ripperda quitted Vienna in the beginning of November. He passed through Italy, and taking ship at Genoa, disembarked at Barcelona. On landing there, he gave to the officers of the garrison, who crowded to pay their respects, an ample account of the transactions at Vienna, declaring that the Emperor had 150,000 troops ready to march at an hour's * warning, and that as many more could be brought into the field in six months. He spoke contemptuously of France, threatened the Hanoverian allies, if they should presume to oppose the designs of the Emperor and Philip; declared that France should be pillaged, that the king of Prussia would be crushed in one campaign, and that George the First would be deprived of his German territories by the Emperor, and of his British dominions by the Pretender. At the conclusion of theserodomontades, he continued his journey without delay, and rode post to Madrid, where he arrived on the 11th of December, in the afternoon; after a short interview with his wife, he repaired to the palace without changing his dress, and went to the antichamber. Applying to the lord in waiting for admission, he was informed that Grimaldo, the secretary of state, was with the king and queen of Spain, and that he could not be immediately admitted. He expressed, in terms of derision, his impatience and surprise that Grimaldo continued so long, and on his coming out took no notice of him, but desired the lord in waiting to announce his own arrival.

1725.
Returns to
Spain.

He was instantly admitted, and received with the highest marks of kindness and satisfaction †. The conference was long; and on the following day he was nominated minister and secretary of state, in the room of Grimaldo; all the other ministers, councils, and foreign ambassadors were ordered to transact business with him; and without the name of prime minister, he was invested with the same uncontrouled authority as had been enjoyed by Alberoni. But he possessed more turbulence, self-sufficiency, and haughtiness than the cardinal, without his address, resources, and incorruptible integrity, and the British ambassador, who knew his character well, observed, that without the spirit of prophecy, "One might foresee ten Alberoni's in this Ripperda, as Scylla did ten Marius's in Julius Cæsar."

Appointed
prime minister.

It soon appeared that Ripperda possessed neither address or abilities sufficient to carry his gigantic schemes into execution; and the king, irritated by the disappointment of his sanguine hopes, and angry at having been the dupe

His disgrace.

* W. Stanhope to lord Townshend, December 27. † Memoires de Montgon, tome i. p. 207, 208.

Period IV. of this superficial pretender, repeatedly told the queen, that Ripperda was
 1727 to 1730. a madman, and must be removed.

Sworn with vanity and presumption, he seemed, however, to defy all opposition. "I know," he said, "that the Spanish ministers and nation are irritated against me, but I laugh at their attempts. The queen, to whom I have rendered the most essential services, will protect me." And another time he exclaimed at a public levee, that he was shielded by six friends who would defend him against all intrigues, God, the Blessed Virgin, the emperor and empress, the king and queen of Spain *. But although Ripperda owed his elevation to the union he had formed between the courts of Vienna and Madrid, and appears, from this expression, to have perfectly understood, that his continuance in power could only be secured by supporting that system; yet such was his caprice or vanity, that soon after his establishment, he began to deviate from the line of conduct by which he had attained it. He relaxed in his attentions to count Konigseck, the imperial ambassador, and was suspected of endeavouring to form an union with those of Great Britain and Holland. This conduct rendered Konigseck his enemy; the incapacity of the minister became daily more apparent, and his vain-glorious boasting, produced nothing but the contempt and derision of the statesmen of every nation.

Under these circumstances, Don Joseph and Louis de Patinho, secured the protection of the queen, by the private recommendation of her confessor, Don Domingo da Guerra, who represented them as persons highly qualified to direct the helm of government, and well inclined to support the plans of Ripperda as far as they related to the aggrandisement of Don Carlos. They also gained the interest of count Konigseck by offers of supplying the imperial court with the promised subsidies. Both the queen and Konigseck now suffered the king's resentment against Ripperda to break out; they no longer counteracted the cabals of the Spanish ministers, nor concealed the clamours of the nation against an upstart, a convert, and a foreigner.

Ripperda at length perceiving that he was detested by the people, thwarted by the Spanish ministers, opposed by Konigseck, despised by the king, and declining in the favour of the queen, paid great court to the British and Dutch ambassadors, and made the most humble professions of respect and duty to the king of England. In the midst of these continued apprehensions and alarms, he was dismissed from the superintendence of the finances, under the pretence of delivering him from part of the burthen of government. Foreseeing that this would be speedily followed by the loss of all his employments, he requested the king's permission to retire from his service; but this demand was not complied with, and he continued to transact business

* Memoires de Montgon, tome i. p. 210.

till the 14th of May, when he received a letter from the marquis de la Paz, that the king accepted his resignation, and conferred on him a pension of 3,000 pistoles. The general satisfaction which this event diffused, and the tumultuous acclamations of the populace, who assembled in large bodies before his house, filled him with apprehensions of being massacred; and after writing a submissive letter to the king, he took refuge in the hotel of the British ambassador, who was with the court at Aranjuez.

On his return to Madrid, the evening of the 15th, Stanhope had a difficult part to act. It was of the greatest importance to obtain from Ripperda a communication of the secrets of the Spanish cabinet, and particularly an account of the negotiations which had recently taken place, and were then transacting between the courts of Vienna and Madrid, and yet be careful not to offend the king of Spain, by appearing to countenance a discarded minister, in opposition to the will of the sovereign in whose court he resided. The caution and prudence with which he conducted himself on this delicate occasion, reflects honour on his judgment, and contributed greatly to his future elevation. He contrived to give protection to the ex-minister, and to detain him in his house, until he had extorted from him all the secrets which he was willing or able to communicate.

Ripperda now betrayed to him the secret articles of the treaty of Vienna, and probably exaggerated the designs of the Emperor and the king of Spain, with a view to ingratiate himself with the king of England, and to exasperate the nation against those two monarchs who had occasioned his disgrace. He, who in the height of his power was so giddy and presumptuous, was now become so abject, that in making his disclosure, his whole frame shook with agitation, he appeared to be in the greatest agonies, and wept like a child.

For the purpose of conveying the intelligence communicated by Ripperda, which was of too much importance to be sent by the post, or even to be intrusted in a dispatch by a common courier, Keene, then consul general, afterwards ambassador in Spain, was dispatched to England. After communicating in person, the secret with which he was intrusted to the duke of Newcastle and the other ministers of state, he drew up, by order of the king, a letter to the duke of Newcastle, containing the substance of Ripperda's conversation, which is inserted in the correspondence *.

After a negotiation of a few days, which passed between the Spanish court and the British ambassador, Ripperda was taken by force from his house, and transferred to the castle of Segovia, from whence he made his escape, after a confinement of fifteen months.

Imprisoned
in the castle
of Segovia.

* See Period IV. Article Ripperda.

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His escape.

The governor of the castle and his wife, being both infirm, could not pay constant attention to their prisoners, and the servant maid *, being seduced by the duke, contrived his escape, and effected it with the assistance of a corporal, who was one of the guards; while his faithful valet, with unexampled attachment, remained in his apartment, and for some time prevented intrusion, by declaring that his master was indisposed †. The duke had just recovered from a severe fit of the gout, and not without the greatest difficulty descended the ladder of ropes which was let down from the window of his apartment, and repaired to the place where a mule and a guide waited for him. Unable to continue riding he gave his mule to the guide, and hired a carriage, but proceeded so slowly that he employed five days in travelling to a small village on the frontiers of Portugal, where he remained until he was joined by his two confidants. With them he arrived at Miranda de Duero, the first town in Portugal, and from thence continued to Oporto, where he embarked for England, on board the Charity, under the name of Don Manuel de Mendosa ‡.

Arrives in England.

The vessel was forced by contrary winds into Corke, and in the beginning of October, he landed at Comb-martin, in Devonshire, with the young woman, the corporal, and a servant, and passed a few days at Exeter. Townshend and Walpole, apprised of his arrival and departure from Exeter, dispatched Corbiere, under secretary of state, to meet him on the western road, who conveyed him in a coach and four to Eton, where he was lodged incognito, in an apartment belonging to Dr. Bland, dean of Durham, and head master of the school. There he was met by Townshend, who received him with the greatest marks of attention, with a view to obtain from him fuller and more accurate information concerning the secret articles of the treaty of Vienna. After a residence of a few days at Eton, he departed with the same secrecy to London, where he arrived on the 13th. After continuing for some time incognito, he took a large house in Soho square, and a villa, and lived in a magnificent style. During his residence in England, he maintained an occasional correspondence with Walpole, and having made a rapid proficiency in the English language, conceived the chimerical hope of filling some high department in administration. While the differences with Spain were under discussion, and a possibility of a rupture with that country continued, the ministers kept up an amicable intercourse with Ripperda, which probably fed his delusion, and inflamed his ambition. But when the con-

* Campbell, in his Memoirs of the Duke of Ripperda, has converted the servant maid into the daughter of a Castilian nobleman, and the antiquated wife of the governor, into a sprightly and beautiful young woman.

† See letter from Keene to the duke of Newcastle, giving an account of Ripperda's escape. —Correspondence, Article Ripperda.

‡ Memoires de Montgon. Political State of Great Britain.

clusion of the treaty of Seville, contrary to his views and remonstrances, rendered his information no longer useful, he felt the pain of disappointed self-importance, and in the year 1731, withdrew in disgust to Holland.

Animated by a spirit of vengeance against Spain, which he found he could not satisfy among the powers of Europe, he embarked for Barbary, at the instigation of the ambassador from Morocco, entered into the service of the emperor Muley Abdallah, embraced the Mahometan religion, was created a bashaw, obtained the command of the army and the office of prime minister; and gained the entire confidence of the emperor. After several successes over the Spaniards, and defeating a competitor for the throne of Morocco, in which he gave signs of great courage and skill, he was worsted near Ceuta, and preserved his life, by resigning his command. He deserted Muley Abdallah, when dethroned by Muley Ali, and finally retired to Tetuan, where he lived under the protection of the bashaw, and died in 1737, at a very advanced age*.

Chapter 35.
1728.

Adventures
in Morocco.

Death.

Cawthorn, in his poem on the Vanity of Human Enjoyments, has well delineated the capricious and motley character of Ripperda.

O pause, lest virtue every guard resign,
And the sad fate of Ripperda be thine.
This glorious wretch indulged at once to move
A nation's wonder and a monarch's love;
Blest with each charm politer courts admire,
The grace to soften, and the soul to fire,
Forsook his native bogs with proud disdain,
And, though a Dutchman, rose the pride of Spain.
This hour the pageant waves the Imperial rod,
All Philip's empire trembling at his nod;
The next disgrac'd, he flies to Britain's isle,
And courts the sunshine of a Walpole's smile.
Unheard, despis'd, to southern climes he steers,
And shines again at Sallé and Algiers;
Bids pale Morocco all his schemes adore,
And pours her thunder on th' Hesperian shore:
All nature's ties, all virtue's creeds belied,
Each church abandon'd, and each God denied;
Without a friend his sepulchre to shield,
His carcase from the vultures of the field,
He dies, of all ambition's sons the worst,
By Afric liated, and by Europe curst.

* This account of Ripperda is principally drawn from the dispatches of St. Saphorin at Vienna, of William Stanhope at Madrid, and

from "An Account of Ripperda," by two Sicilian abbots, in the Walpole Papers.

Period IV.

1727 to 1730.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SIXTH:

1730.

Sanguine Hopes of Opposition that Walpole would be removed.—Their Efforts in Parliament.—Debates on the Imperial Loan—on the Pension Bill—on Dunkirk—and the Renewal of the East India Company's Charter.—Arrangement of the Ministry on the Resignation of Lord Townshend.—Characters of the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Harrington.

Coalition of
the Tories
and discon-
tented
Whigs.

ALTHOUGH the Tories had hitherto joined the discontented Whigs in their attacks against the minister, yet their coalition had never been hearty and sincere. They formed a separate body; and as they did not amount to less than one hundred and ten members, they considered themselves, both from their superior numbers and weight as country gentlemen, entitled rather to give than receive an impulse from the other parts of the minority. They did not therefore chuse to pay that regular attendance in parliament, which a constant and uniform warfare required from all those who, however differing in many points, were united in that of distressing the minister. But in the session which opened in 1730, a regular and systematic plan was formed by Bolingbroke, and carried into execution by means of his address and activity. His connection with Pulteney, as the joint manager of the Craftsman, gave him an influence over the Whigs; and his intimacy with Sir William Wyndham, secured to him the acquiescence of the Tories. He had persuaded the whole body, that notwithstanding the signature of the convention at Pardo, a peace with Spain still met with insuperable difficulties. That Philip had not relinquished his demand of Gibraltar; that the Spanish depredations would still continue to be committed with impunity; that the British commerce with Spain would either be suspended or annihilated. Measures were therefore concerted to call the ministers to account for their supineness and pusillanimity. The clamours thus excited, extremely popular in a nation jealous of its honour, and anxious to secure its commercial advantages, occasioned great discontents, as well amongst the friends as the enemies of the minister.

Conduct of
Bolingbroke.

Although the conclusion of the treaty of Seville, which was highly favourable to the commercial interests of England, and honourable to her national

tional glory, disconcerted opposition, and overfet the schemes of Bolingbroke in this particular, yet he was too able not to form another plan of attack. Having made a coalition between the discordant parties in the minority, and appointed a general muster in parliament, he still continued to animate the mass with fresh spirit. His labours were now turned to sow discord among the Hanoverian allies, to avail himself of a growing misunderstanding which had recently appeared between England and France, to encourage the Emperor to persist in his refusal to admit Spanish garrisons into Parma and Tuscany, and thus to counteract the execution of the treaty of Seville. Under his auspices, and by his direction, the opposition brought forwards many questions calculated to harass government, and to render themselves popular. The expectations formed by the disaffected were highly sanguine; and a notion prevailed both at home and abroad *, that the fall of the minister was unavoidable. Their hopes of success were founded on the disunion in the cabinet; on the supposed aversion of the king to Walpole, and on the disgust of the Whigs who adhered to Townshend.

Chapter 36.

1730.

Hopes of
opposition.

The first trial of their strength was made on the question concerning the Imperial loan. The Emperor, by the treaty of Seville, having been deprived of liberal remittances from Spain, attempted to borrow £. 400,000 in London. A bill was accordingly presented to the commons for preventing loans to foreign powers, without licence from the king under his privy seal. Had the ministry permitted the loan, they would have been abundantly and deservedly reproached: Advocates, however, against the prohibition were not wanting. The hardships of all restraints, the disadvantage to us, and the advantage to the Dutch, were specious pretences. Walpole took an active share in combating the arguments of opposition, and the question was carried †. A sufficient justification of the measure was, that the want of money compelled the court of Vienna to submit to terms of accommodation.

June.

Debate on
the Imperial
loan.

The most popular and plausible measure proposed by opposition was, the pension bill, which was now first introduced, and which from this period, became a never-failing topic of antiministerial attack and of ministerial defence. Sandys moved for leave to bring in a bill to disable all persons from sitting in parliament, who had any pension, or any offices held in trust for them from the crown, directly or indirectly; and for the purpose of enforcing this exclusion, he proposed that every member, on taking his seat, should swear that he had not any pension, directly

On the pen-
sion bill.

February 16.

* Secret intelligence from Paris. Walpole Papers.

† Journals.

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1727 to 1730.

March 3,
1730-1.

or indirectly, did not enjoy any gratuity or reward, or hold any office or place of trust; and that after having accepted the same, he would signify it to the house within fourteen days. Walpole, who knew the unpopularity of the arguments which could be urged against the bill, and appreciated the effect of those which would be brought in its favour, declined taking any active part against it, notwithstanding the express injunctions of the king*, who called it a villanous bill, and the disgust of Townshend, who was unwilling that the odium of its rejection should be cast upon the house of lords. He does not seem to have spoken in the debate, or to have exerted his usual influence; for while most of the questions supported or opposed by government, were passed or thrown out by a majority of more than two to one, the bill was carried by 144 against 134†. It was negatived by the house of lords after a long debate‡, and a protest entered by twenty-six peers. A similar fate attended it the next session; and during his whole administration, Sir Robert Walpole never made any strong opposition to it, but left it to be rejected by the upper house. It was now the generally received opinion, and not without foundation, that the minister suffered the pension bill to pass the house of commons, because he knew that it would be thrown out by the peers. Sandys therefore, in the subsequent Session, brought forward a motion for appointing a committee, to inquire whether any members had, directly or indirectly, any pensions, or any offices from the crown held in trust for them, in part, or in the whole. Walpole ventured to oppose it; he called it a motion for erecting the house into a court of inquisition, and urged, that it justified the treatment which the bill had met with in the upper house. He declared that the act, if passed, could not answer the end for which it was proposed, unless the house should assume to itself a power unknown to the constitution, namely, a power of compelling every member that was suspected, to accuse himself, not of any thing criminal, for it could not be criminal to take either place or pension from the crown, and in consequence of that construction, to dispossess half the counties and boroughs in England of their representatives. The arguments and influence of the minister prevailed, and the bill was thrown out, by 206 against 143§. Yet such was the unpopularity of the rejection, that many members, suspected of having pensions or places held in trust, voted for it, lest their opposition might disoblige their constituents.

* Note from the king to lord Townshend. Correspondence.

† Journals. Tindal.

‡ Lord's Debates. Tindal.

§ Journals.

The stipulation to destroy the harbour of Dunkirk, made at the peace of Utrecht, and renewed in the treaty with France of 1717, had never been fully complied with. The French cabinet, always anxious to retain the use of a harbour, which, in case of a war with Great Britain, was situated so advantageously for the annoyance of our trade, continued clandestinely to prevent the demolition of the works. Frequent remonstrances were made by the English government, and promises extorted from the French cabinet, that the treaty should be carried into effect: but the inhabitants, either by the suggestion or connivance of the French government, kept the harbour and works in a state of repair.

Chapter 36.

1736.

On the affair
of Dunkirk.

This was a subject which gave great uneasiness to the minister, and on which he frequently expatiated in his letters to his brother, and even reproached him for neglecting to enforce the demolition. It was a point, however, of so much delicacy, that cardinal Fleury, though he constantly avowed his readiness to accede to the demands of the British minister, yet always eluded them, probably not daring to irritate the people of France by the enforcement of so disagreeable a command. The delays on this subject afforded to opposition a ground for insinuating that the ministry were in connivance with the court of France, to sanction the repairs of that harbour. Bolingbroke was well aware that nothing would more exasperate the public mind, than the persuasion that the French were employed in the reparation of that harbour; and if that fact could be proved, that the suspicion of conniving at it would fall upon the ministry: he was no less convinced, that it would weaken the credit of the minister abroad, if he could prove that France did not fulfil its engagements, and that a misunderstanding had arisen between the two kingdoms. To obtain evidence in support of these points, he sent his secretary, Brinsden, to inspect the state of the works at Dunkirk.

On the imperfect and exaggerated report of this agent, was founded a motion for an address, that "the king should direct that all orders, instructions, reports, and proceedings, had in regard to the port and harbour of Dunkirk, since its demolition, be laid before the house." The king having agreed to this address, the necessary documents were produced, which being read, and witnesses examined, Sir William Wyndham moved, that in what had been done relating to the harbour of Dunkirk, there was a manifest violation of the treaties between the two crowns. But before he was seconded, the other side made a motion for an address of thanks to the king, "for his attention to the interests of the nation, in causing a proper application to be made to the court of France, not only for putting a stop

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to the works carrying on, but for demolishing such as had been made by the inhabitants of Dunkirk, for repairing the port and channel there; and to express their satisfaction in the good effects which his majesty's instances had had, by obtaining express orders from the most Christian king, for causing to be destroyed all the works that might have been erected at Dunkirk, contrary to the treaties of Utrecht and the Hague; and their reliance upon their being punctually executed; and further to declare their satisfaction in the firm union and mutual fidelity, which so happily subsisted and were so strictly preserved between the two nations *."

This unexpected motion, which prevented the discussion of that proposed by Sir William Wyndham, occasioned a long and warm debate, in which Walpole seems to have particularly distinguished himself. The great object of opposition was to draw over the Whigs, who usually supported government, and had lately wavered, under the plausible notion that the conduct of the minister had been in this instance contradictory to the principles and interests of their party. The object of the minister was to prove to the Whigs, that their principles and interests were no ways affected by this controversy, and that it was simply a Tory question. With great art he introduced a personal application, and made a most vigorous attack on Bolingbroke, who was particularly obnoxious to the Whigs, at whose instigation he insinuated this inquiry was made, and whose character and spirit of opposition he drew in the most unfavourable colours. Sir William Wyndham, provoked by the Philippic against his friend, defended him with uncommon energy, and drew a comparison between him and Walpole, in which he attempted to shew that Bolingbroke was by no means inferior in honesty and integrity to the minister. This comparison called up Henry Pelham, who ably seconded the attack against Bolingbroke, and excited such a general indignation among the Whigs, that the address was carried by 274 against 149 †. The loss of this question by so large a majority, which the opposition expected to have carried triumphantly, increased the popularity of the minister, and his credit abroad; and Horace Walpole, who took a considerable share in the debate, observes in a letter to Poyntz, this was the greatest day, both with respect to the thing itself, and the consequences, that had ever occurred within his memory, for the king and ministry, and must prove a thunder-bolt to their adversaries in England, as well as abroad, as it contradicted the assertions of opposition, that the king and the Whigs were dissatisfied with his brother's administration ‡.

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 71.

† See Journals.

‡ Horace Walpole to lord Harrington and

Stephen Poyntz. March 2d, 1730. Correspondence.

Another object of great national interest, brought forward by opposition, was to prevent the renewal of the charter of the East India company, which was near its expiration, and to form another incorporated society without the exclusive privileges, which should grant licences, upon certain conditions, to all persons inclined to trade to the East Indies. The leading men in the minority, foreseeing that the company would apply to the legislature for the renewal of their charter, had secretly prevailed on many respectable merchants in the city to engage in the scheme. It had a popular tendency, from the general aversion which is always entertained against monopolies and exclusive privileges, by those who derive no immediate share from the emoluments; and was still farther recommended by the plausible pretence of easing the public burthens, by obtaining a large sum of money from the new incorporated society.

Having obtained information of their views, the minister laboured to counteract them. He was convinced that the trade could only be carried on by an exclusive company. The persons who were to form the new society, were wholly unacquainted with the secrets of the business, and unless the company could be induced to communicate information, and to part with its forts and settlements in the country, the trade might be reduced or annihilated. Having concerted his plan with a few of the directors, in whom he placed implicit confidence, and aware that the chief hopes of success conceived by opposition, were founded on the popular ground of obtaining sums of money for the use of the public, he anticipated their views, by insinuating to the house, that a part of his ways and means would be derived from the East India company. This unexpected turn surprised the minority, and wholly disconcerted their plan before it was brought to maturity. They had however proceeded so far in opening private subscriptions, and making engagements, that they could not recede*. A petition was therefore presented to the house by several merchants, traders, and others, offering to advance £. 3,200,000 at five payments, before the 25th of May 1733, at an interest of 5 per cent. to redeem the fund and trade of the East India company, provided the lenders might be incorporated and vested with their whole trade, yet so as not to trade with their joint stock, or in a corporate capacity, but the trade be open to all his majesty's subjects, upon licence from such proposed new company, desiring the same, on proper terms and conditions; and provided the trade be exercised to and from the port of

Chapter 36.

1730.

On the renewal of the charter of the East India company.

* Horace Walpole to lord Harrington, March 2. Correspondence.

London

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London only; and be subject to redemption at any time upon three years notice, after a term of thirty-one years, and repayment of the principal.

After a long debate, the petition was rejected by a majority of 223 against 138*.

The opposition, however, were not intimidated by the rejection of this proposal. They had been taken unawares, and compelled, by the address of the minister, to bring it forward before it had been fully digested. They resolved therefore to introduce the business again, and employed the intervening time in publishing anonymous letters, essays in periodical papers, and pamphlets; against exclusive companies in general, and particularly against the East India company. All the arguments † which had ever been advanced against monopolies in this and other mercantile companies, were retailed on this occasion, and all the benefits which were supposed to result from a free trade, were magnified with great art and subtilty. The ministers and the East India company were not on their part silent; they likewise defended, with no less skill, the advantages of an united company, vested with exclusive privileges, and bound by peculiar regulations, under the controul of the legislature. The petition was again presented to the house of commons, on the 9th of April, and rejected without a division. While it was depending, the minister brought in his bill, which prolonged the charter to 1766, on the condition of paying £. 200,000 towards the supply of the year, and of reducing the interest of the money advanced to the public, from £. 160,000 to £. 120,000, or one per cent. by which bargain, the nation was benefited to the amount of at least a million.

Rice act.

An act which passed this session, though trifling in itself, yet must not be omitted, as it formed part of those commercial regulations which the minister was endeavouring gradually to introduce, by taking off several restraints that shackled foreign commerce. It seems to have been the first deviation from a general principle which had been established by the European nations who had dominions in America, to maintain an exclusive intercourse between the mother country and the colonies. The narrow spirit of this impolitic restriction, from which incredible advantages were supposed to result, but which in reality was productive of great inconveniencies, did not escape the notice of the minister; and he suffered an exception to be

* Journals.

† The reader will find the arguments, pro and con, in Anderson's History of Commerce,

who has treated the question with great judgment. Vol. 3. p. 156—162.

made of rice, as a perishable commodity. An act accordingly was passed, for granting liberty to carry rice from Carolina directly to any part of Europe, south of Cape Finisterre, in British bottoms, navigated by British sailors*. In consequence of this beneficial act, the plantations of rice were considerably increased in the province of Carolina: The good effects of this regulation induced the minister afterwards to extend the privilege to the colony of Georgia. And it is the observation of an eminent commercial writer, "that the consequence of both these well-judged laws has been, "that the rice of the American plantations has been preferred to the rice of "Verona and Egypt, which had before a general sale†."

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1736.

The opposition moved in the course of the session for various papers, relating to foreign affairs. Of those they obtained, little use seems to have been made, except to furnish matter to the writers of pamphlets and essays in periodical papers. These publications now assumed such an air of violence and audacity, as seems to have alarmed the minister, perhaps too much, for it induced him to make it one of the topics of animadversion in the speech from the throne which terminated the session.

Close of the session.

The same day on which the house was prorogued, Townshend resigned. Lord Harrington was appointed secretary of state, Henry Pelham secretary at war, and the privy seal was given to the earl of Wilmington, on whose assistance opposition had relied with the most perfect security. In a few months after, he was created lord president of the council, which high office he held till the removal of Sir Robert Walpole.

May 15th.

Change of the ministry.

The charge of foreign affairs now ostensibly devolved on the duke of Newcastle and lord Harrington, whose characters form a remarkable contrast, though they acted together with the utmost cordiality.

Thomas Pelham Holles, duke of Newcastle, was son of Thomas lord Pelham, by Grace, sister of John Holles, duke of Newcastle. He was born in August 1693-4, and on the death of his father, in 1712, succeeded to the barony of Pelham: he inherited a large part of the great estate of his uncle, who had no issue male, and took the name of Holles. Being of a great Whig family, he strenuously promoted the succession of the line of Brunswick. Soon after the accession of George the First, he was created earl of Clare, and in 1715, duke of Newcastle. He supported the administration of his brother-in-law ‡ lord Townshend; but on the schism of the

Character of the duke of Newcastle.

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 76.

† Anderson's Origin of Commerce, vol. 3. p. 164.

‡ The first wife of Charles viscount Towns-

hend was Elizabeth, daughter of lord Pelham by his first wife, Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Sir William Jones, attorney general to Charles the Second.

Whig

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Whig administration in 1717, he attached himself to Sunderland, by whose influence he was appointed lord chamberlain of the household, and invested with the order of the garter. On the coalition which took place in 1720, between Sunderland and Townshend, he joined his former friend. During the struggle in the cabinet between Townshend and Walpole on one side, and Carteret and Cadogan on the other, he uniformly attached himself to the brother ministers. His devotion to their cause was so warm, and his consequence as one of the great Whig leaders so highly appreciated, that he was solely admitted into the most intimate confidence, and entrusted with the most secret transactions. In their private correspondence, they invariably style him their good friend: Townshend repeatedly desires Walpole to give information to the duke. In one place he expressly says, "When I desire you to communicate this to no one, I always except the duke of Newcastle;" and Walpole no less frequently assures his correspondent, that he has no reserve for their common friend. When it became necessary to remove Carteret from the office of secretary of state, Newcastle was selected as the fittest person to fill that station, which in consequence of the alliance with France, was a post of the highest delicacy and importance.

Newcastle was thirty years of age when he was raised to this office, and as he succeeded Carteret, whose knowledge of foreign affairs, and talents for business were duly appreciated, his appointment to so important a trust was contemptuously spoken of, and the new secretary was considered as not capable of fully discharging the duties of his office. His outward appearance and manners, seemed to justify this observation. He was trifling and embarrassed in conversation, always eager and in a hurry to transact business, yet without due method. He was unbounded in flattery to those above him, or whose interest he was desirous to conciliate, and highly gratified with the grossest adulation to himself. The facility with which he made and broke his promises, became almost proverbial. He was not sufficiently considerate to his secretaries and subordinate clerks, exacting from them a large sacrifice of time and labour; and to his immediate dependants he was fretful and capricious.

With these unfavourable appearances, he gave few symptoms of the talents which he undoubtedly possessed. In fact, he had much better abilities than are usually attributed to him. He had a quick comprehension; he was an useful and frequent debater in the house of peers; had an answer ready on all occasions, and spoke with great animation, though with little arrangement, and without grace or dignity. He wrote with uncommon facility,

facility, and with such fluency of words, that no one ever used a greater variety of expressions; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that in his most confidential letters, written with such expedition as to be almost illegible, there is scarcely a single erasure or alteration.

His temper was peevish and fretful, and he was always jealous of those with whom he acted. Of this jealousy, Townshend occasionally complained in his private correspondence with Horace Walpole, and in one instance, he particularly observes, "This was my view in sending a projet mitoyen, but my dear friend the duke looks upon the thoughts of any body else as reflections upon his own; and instead of considering the use that may be made of what is suggested by another, looks upon it as a personal thing, and runs out into a long justification of his own performances, which nobody finds fault with*." Sir Robert Walpole also repeatedly insinuated to his correspondents, not to omit writing confidentially to Newcastle, and exhorted them rather to neglect him than the duke, who would be grievously offended by the smallest omission. This jealousy, suppressed in some measure during his subordinate situation under lord Townshend, and for some time after his resignation, increased as he advanced in years, was highly troublesome to the minister of the house of commons, and created so much disgust, as to occasion frequent altercations.

George the Second had conceived a very early and violent antipathy to the duke of Newcastle, which was augmented by the discordancy of their tempers and habits, particularly by his deficiency in method and exactness, which the king considered as essential characteristics of a minister. The representations of Walpole, on the necessity of conciliating a man so powerful from family and party connections, had induced the king to moderate or conceal his repugnance; but his dislike broke out occasionally into bitter expressions of contempt and aversion. In one of these discontented moods, he said to a confidential person, "You see that I am compelled to take the duke of Newcastle to be my minister, who is not fit to be chamberlain in the smallest court of Germany."

With these habits, and this disposition, and under the necessity of struggling against the deep-rooted aversion of George the Second, it is a matter of surprise that he so long retained his power; for if we reckon from his first promotion to the post of lord chamberlain, to his resignation at the commencement of the reign of George the Third, he continued to fill a high situation at court for a period of six and forty years. This long continuance in office

* Walpole Papers.

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1727 to 1739.

was owing to his situation as the chief leader of the Whigs, to his princely fortune and profusion of expence, to the high integrity and disinterestedness of his character, and to the uniform support which he gave to the house of Brunswick.

As a subordinate minister, acting under superior influence, his zeal and activity were highly useful; and his want of order and warmth of temper, were counteracted and modified by the method and prudence of Walpole. But when he was placed at the head of affairs, he became distracted * with the multiplicity of business, yet unwilling to divide it with others. Weakness of counsels, fluctuation of opinion, and deficiency of spirit, marked his administration during an inglorious period of sixteen years; from which England did not recover, until the mediocrity of his ministerial talents, and the indecision of his character, were controuled by the ascendancy of Pitt.

Character of
lord Har-
rington.

His colleague in office, William Stanhope, (descended from Sir John Stanhope, brother of Philip the first earl of Chesterfield) was third son of John Stanhope of Elvaston, in Derbyshire, and after receiving a learned education, he entered into the profession of arms; served in Spain under his kinsman James, afterwards earl Stanhope, and after several promotions, obtained, in 1715, a regiment of horse. He was chosen in the first parliament of the reign of George the First, for the town of Derby; and in 1717, appointed envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the king of Spain. On the rupture which broke out between Spain and England in 1718, he was named envoy and plenipotentiary to the court of Turin. In May 1721 he served as a volunteer in the French army commanded by marshal Berwick, which laid siege to Fontarabia. During this war, he concerted a plan for the destruction of three Spanish ships of the line, and a great quantity of naval stores, in the port of St. Andero, in the Bay of Biscay; an English squadron effected that enterprize; he himself contributed to the execution, by accompanying a detachment of troops, which Berwick sent at his solicitation, and was the first that leaped into the water when the boats approached the shore †.

On the peace with Spain, he was constituted brigadier general, and returned to Madrid in the same character as before. During his residence at that court, he was witness to many extraordinary events, which he has ably detailed in his dispatches. The abdication of Philip the Fifth, the succession and death of Louis, the resumption of the crown by Philip, the return of the Spanish infant, the separation of Spain from France, and union with

* Lord Harvey, in a letter to Horace Walpole, said of him, "that he did nothing in the same hurry and agitation, as if he did every thing." Correspondence, Period V.

† Collins's Peerage.

the house of Austria, and the rise and fall of Ripperda. He manifested great firmness and discretion when that minister was forcibly taken from his house; and his conduct on this occasion, principally impressed the king and the ministers with a deep sense of his diplomatic talents, and contributed to his future elevation.

Chapter 36.

1730.

On the rupture with Spain, which commenced with the siege of Gibraltar, he returned to England, and was appointed vice chamberlain to the king, and soon afterwards nominated, in conjunction with Horace Walpole and Stephen Poyntz, plenipotentiary at the congress of Soissons.

1727.

He had now two great objects in view, a peerage, and the office of secretary of state. But he had to struggle as well against the ill-will of the king, who was highly displeased with his brother Charles Stanhope, as against the prejudices of Sir Robert Walpole, who, deeply impressed with a recollection of the conduct of earl Stanhope at Hanover, had taken an aversion to the very name. It required all the influence of the duke of Newcastle, and the friendship of Horace Walpole, to surmount these obstructions; which were not removed until he had gained an accession to his diplomatic character, by repairing to Spain, and concluding the treaty of Seville. His merits in that delicate negotiation, extorted the peerage from the king; and on the resignation of lord Townshend, he was nominated secretary of state. In that office, his knowledge of foreign affairs, his application to business, his attention to diplomatic forms, the solemnity of his deportment, the precision of his dispatches, and his propensity to the adoption of vigorous measures against France, on the death of Augustus the Second, rendered him highly acceptable to the king. Having offended queen Caroline, by affecting to set up an interest independent of her, he would have been removed, had not his prudence and caution again conciliated her favour.

He never cordially coalesced with Sir Robert Walpole; and although he almost uniformly acted in subservience to his views, he looked up to the duke of Newcastle as his patron and friend, and gave many instances in which he sacrificed his own interests, even in opposition to the commands of the king, to gratitude and friendship. He was a man of strong sense and moderation; of high honour and disinterested integrity; and so tenacious of his word, that Philip of Spain said of him, "Stanhope is the only foreign minister who never deceived me." He was of a mild and even temper, and had contracted, by long habit, so much patience and phlegm, that he was characterised by the Portuguese minister, Don Arevedo *, as "*not being accustomed to interrupt*

* Orford Papers.

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those who spoke to him." A contemporary historian * has also farther described him as one whose moderation, good sense, and integrity, were such, that he was not considered as a party man, and had few or no personal enemies. Although he never spoke in the house of peers, yet he was highly useful in recommending to the cabinet the most prudent method of attack or defence, and in suggesting hints to those who were endowed with the gift of the tongue.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SEVENTH:

1730.

Origin and Progress of the Disagreement between Townshend and Walpole.—Resignation—Retreat and Death of Townshend.

Causes of the disagreement between Townshend and Walpole.

THE treaty of Seville was the concluding act of Townshend's administration; it was signed on the 9th of November 1729, and on the 16th of May he retired in disgust from the office of secretary of state. His resignation was owing to a disagreement with his brother in law and co-adjutor, Sir Robert Walpole, which had long subsisted. It had been occasionally compromised by the interference of common friends, but finally broke into a rupture, which rendered the continuance of both in office incompatible.

The causes of this misunderstanding were various, and originated from the difference of their tempers, from disagreement on subjects of domestic and foreign politics, from political and private jealousy.

Townshend was frank, impetuous, and overbearing; long accustomed to dictate in the cabinet, and fond of recommending violent measures. Walpole was mild, insinuating, pliant, and good-tempered; desirous of conciliating by lenient methods, but prepared to employ vigour when vigour was necessary.

* Tindal.

The rough and impetuous manners of Townshend, began to alienate the king, and disgust the queen. All the members of the cabinet were no less dissatisfied with him. Newcastle, in particular, was anxious to remove a minister, who absolutely directed all foreign affairs, and who rendered him a mere cypher. He wished to procure the appointment of lord Harrington, who already owed his peerage to him, and who, he flattered himself, would act in subservience to his dictates.

To these public causes of misunderstanding, derived from a desire of pre-eminence, a private motive was unfortunately added. The family of Townshend had long been the most conspicuous, and accustomed to take the lead, as the only one then distinguished by a peerage, in the county of Norfolk; the Walpoles were subordinate both in estate and consequence, and Houghton was far inferior in splendour to Rainham*. But circumstances were much altered. Sir Robert Walpole was at the head of the treasury, a peerage had been conferred on his son, the increase of his paternal domains, the building of a magnificent seat, the acquisition of a superb collection of paintings, a sumptuous stile of living, and affable manners, drew to Houghton a conflux of company, and eclipsed the more sober and less splendid establishment at Rainham.

Walpole had long been considered as the first minister in all business relating to the internal affairs: he was the principal butt of opposition, for the name of Townshend scarcely once occurs in the Craftsman, and the other political papers against government, while that of Walpole is seen in almost every page.

His influence over the queen had, on the accession of George the Second, prevented the removal of Townshend. He managed the house of commons, and was supported by a far greater number of friends than his brother minister could boast, who had little parliamentary influence, and still less personal credit.

Walpole felt, in all these circumstances, his superior consequence; he was conscious that he should be supported by the queen, and was unwilling to continue to act in a subordinate situation; while Townshend, who had long been used to dictate, could not bear any opposition to his sentiments, or any resistance to his views. He considered his brother minister as one who had first enlisted himself under his banners, and who ought to continue to act with the same implicit obedience to his commands. Hence a struggle for power ensued.

* Rainham was built by Inigo Jones for Sir Roger Townshend.

Period IV. 1727 to 1730. Townshend had hitherto possessed what the French call *la feuille des benefices*, and had been the principal dispenser of ecclesiastical preferments. This great object of ministerial influence was naturally coveted by Walpole, and had occasioned frequent disputes. In many points of domestic administration, the violence of Townshend's measures was reprobated and opposed by Walpole, particularly in the business of Wood's coinage; in the haughty manner of writing to the duke of Grafton, then lord lieutenant of Ireland; and in the measures adopted in the riots in Scotland in 1725. In foreign affairs, Walpole affected not to interfere, declaring that he did not understand them, and that they did not belong to his department; yet he always opposed, as much as lay in his power, all complicated engagements, and uniformly objected to the too lavish expenditure of the public money in the formation of alliances, which he often considered as useless and chimerical. His remonstrances had produced a sensible effect in opposition to the sentiments of Townshend; but it was particularly in the negotiation for the treaty of Hanover, that a wide difference of opinion had subsisted. He expressed his disapprobation at the precipitate manner in which it was concluded, and was offended that such an important step had been taken without a due communication to him.

He was still more dissatisfied when the Danish subsidy became due. For as France avoided paying her share, and the whole burthen fell upon England, he, as minister of finance, was under the necessity of finding resources to supply the deficiency.

In several dispatches from the foreign ministers in 1725 and 1726, frequent mention is made of the growing misunderstanding between Townshend and Walpole, and a rupture is described as unavoidable. Yet these bickerings and occasional instances of discordant sentiments, did not alienate the brother ministers. They continued to act together, and on the accession of George the Second, the removal of one would have been followed with the resignation of the other. Their union at this period was so close, and the opinion which Walpole entertained of Townshend so favourable, that in 1727, when Townshend was in imminent danger, Walpole expressed, in terms of affection and concern, his apprehensions of the loss which the cause would sustain from his death; "he considered him as the bulwark of the constitution; and trusted that Providence would interpose to save the man, without whom all must fall to the ground *."

These disputes had been frequently allayed by the interposition of lady

* See Correspondence, Period IV.

Townshend;

Townshend; she had, like an Octavia between Anthony and Augustus, by a discreet exertion of her influence as wife and sister, moderated the asperities of the contending politicians. But her mediation had unfortunately ceased by her death, which happened in March 1726.

Queen Caroline observed the growing misunderstanding between the brother ministers, and when the rupture became unavoidable, gave her support to Walpole in preference to Townshend. By her influence, he soon obtained the preponderance.

Townshend, thus reduced to act a secondary part, was resolved to make an effort to recover his former power, by forming a new administration, and removing the duke of Newcastle, whose official jealousy, and attempts to raise lord Harrington to the office of secretary of state, had displeased him, and placing his friend lord Chesterfield, who had long aspired to that station, in his stead. Full of these projects, he accompanied the king to Hanover; and as he was the only English minister of the cabinet abroad, he embraced the favourable opportunity of ingratiating himself. He became more obsequious to the king's German prejudices, paid his court with unceasing assiduity, and appeared to have gained so much influence, that he thought himself capable of obtaining the appointment of Chesterfield, who was at this time ambassador at the Hague, and had considerably distinguished himself in his diplomatic capacity. At the suggestion of lord Townshend, when he waited on the king in his passage through Holland, he requested and obtained permission to attend him to London. When Townshend offered the place of secretary of state to Chesterfield, he inquired if he had secured the queen; his answer implied no doubt. But the very choice he had made was in itself sufficient to counteract his success. Chesterfield had offended the queen by the court he paid to lady Suffolk, and she exerted all her influence with the king, which was seldom exerted in vain, to frustrate the scheme.

Such an attempt, however secretly conducted, could not escape the observation of Walpole. He conferred with the queen on the proper means of averting the design, and the communications he received from her in this and other particulars, inflamed his resentment. On quitting the palace after one of these conferences, he met Townshend at colonel Selwyn's, in Cleveland Court, in the presence of the duke of Newcastle, Mr. Pelham, colonel and Mrs. Selwyn. The conversation turned on a foreign negotiation, which at the desire of Walpole had been relinquished. Townshend, however, still required that the measure should be mentioned to the commons, at the same time

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1730.

Influence
and death of
lady Towns-
hend.The queen
favours Wal-
pole.Prevents the
appointment
of Chester-
field.Altercation
between
Townshend
and Wal-
pole.

1729:

that

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that the house should be informed that it was given up. Walpole objecting to this proposal as inexpedient, and calculated only to give unnecessary trouble, Townshend said, "Since you object, and the house of commons is your concern more than mine, I shall not persist in my opinion; but as I now give way, I cannot avoid observing, that upon my honour I think that mode of proceeding would have been most advisable." Walpole, piqued at these expressions, lost his temper, and said, "My lord, for once, there is no man's sincerity which I doubt so much as your lordship's, and I never doubted it so much as when you are pleased to make such strong professions." Townshend, incensed at this reproach, seized him by the collar, Sir Robert laid hold of him in return, and then both, at the same instant, quitted their hold, and laid their hands upon their swords. Mrs. Selwyn, alarmed, attempted to go out and call the guards, but was prevented by Pelham. But although their friends interposed to prevent an immediate duel, yet the contumelious expressions used on this occasion, rendered all attempts to heal the breach ineffectual.

Their difference as to foreign affairs.

Great difference of opinion had also arisen in regard to foreign affairs. When Townshend accompanied the king abroad, in May 1729, he considered the Emperor as the sole cause of the obstacles which impeded a general pacification, and immediately on his arrival at Hanover, plunged into the chaos of German politics. He was so much incensed against the Emperor, and so vehemently inclined to compel him to accede to the admission of Spanish garrisons into Parma and Leghorn, that he promoted, to the utmost of his power, the conclusion of a subsidiary alliance with the four electors of the Rhine, by which England could not have guaranteed the pragmatic sanction during the existence of that alliance. On the contrary, Walpole, anxious not to do any thing which might render England incapable for a time to gratify the Emperor in his favourite project, secretly opposed the conclusion of the treaty, and laboured to reconcile the discordant politics of Spain and Austria, or if that was impossible, to conciliate Spain without too much irritating the Emperor.

This collision of opinions naturally increased the misunderstanding, led them to counteract each other, and to strive for pre-eminence in the cabinet.

Townshend ineffectually recommends Methuen.

Having failed in raising Chesterfield to the office of secretary of state, Townshend made a last attempt to obtain that place for Sir Paul Methuen, in which he was equally unsuccessful. These disappointments increased his natural irritability, which he vented in peevish expressions against lord Harrington; and these reproaches, probably exaggerated by the duke of Newcastle, increased the animosities in the cabinet.

At

At length the contest was brought to a crisis. Townshend seems to have obtained the good-will of the king by representing, that he was the only support of his German interest, that lord Harrington had neglected pressing the plan of operations against the Emperor, and that Hanover would be sacrificed by the new arrangements. Under these circumstances, the duke of Newcastle had written, with the approbation of the Walpoles, a dispatch to the plenipotentiaries at Soissons, dissuading an attack of the Austrian Netherlands, advising that an army should be assembled on the banks of the Rhine, for the purpose of threatening the frontiers of Bohemia; but strongly recommending, that before this plan was concerted with France, proposals of accommodation should be presented to the Emperor. But before the letter was submitted to the king, Townshend had written to him, enforcing the necessity of forming a plan of hostile operations before any declaration was made, for the purpose of compelling the king of Prussia to submit, and reducing the Emperor to accept of the terms dictated by England and her allies.

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1730.

Is finally defeated.

The king approved this advice, and ordered Townshend to communicate his resolution to the duke of Newcastle and Horace Walpole, that instructions might be forwarded to the plenipotentiaries, in conformity to that opinion. Townshend accordingly sent the letter, with the king's answer, to Horace Walpole, and went into Norfolk for a few days. In this dilemma, the duke despaired of success, and proposed to act agreeably to the dictates of Townshend. But Sir Robert Walpole communicated Newcastle's dispatch to the queen, and obtained, through her influence, the assent of the king, who expressed his full approbation of the contents.

Townshend, finding that his personal influence with the king was not sufficient to counteract the exertions of his rivals, opposed by the queen, and deserted by the remaining members of the cabinet, gave in his resignation, and retired from public affairs.

Resigns.

In several letters to his confidential correspondents abroad, which are still extant in the Rainham Collection, Townshend attributes his resignation principally to the effects of his dangerous illness in 1727, which rendered him incapable of supporting the fatigues of his place, but hints at the same time with great delicacy at the coolness and misintelligence which had arisen between him and Sir Robert Walpole, and to the disgust he had recently received from that quarter, which fortified his resolution. At the same time he adds, with great spirit and dignity, that he is happy to announce that his retreat will not make any alteration in public affairs, and that he never could have resolved to quit his situation, if he had not been fully convinced that

Explains the motives of his resignation.

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1727 to 1730.

Walpole would follow the same principles, and carry on the same measures which had been hitherto pursued. In his letter to Slingelandt, he observes, "the king has had the goodness to permit me to retire in the most obliging manner, and has most graciously received the assurances, which I took the liberty to make, that notwithstanding my resignation, I should always be ready to furnish all the eclairsissements in my power, whenever it shall be deemed necessary for his service."

Retirement.

Townshend retired with a most unsullied character for integrity, honour, and disinterestedness, and gave several striking proofs that he could command the natural warmth of his temper, and rise superior to the malignant influence of party spirit and disappointed ambition. The opposition, who had formed sanguine expectations of the consequences of the disunion in the cabinet, were prepared to receive him with open arms, but he resisted their advances, and firmly persevered in his original determination. Soon after Chesterfield commenced his ardent opposition to Walpole, he went to Rainham, and requested Townshend to attend an important question in the house of lords. Townshend replied, that he had formed a resolution which he could not break, of never again engaging in political contests. "I recollect," he added, "that lord Cowper, though a staunch Whig, had been betrayed by personal pique and party resentment, in his opposition to the ministry, to throw himself into the arms of the Tories, and even to support principles which tended to serve the cause of the Jacobites. I know that I am extremely warm; and I am apprehensive if I should attend the house of lords, I also may be hurried away by the impetuosity of my temper, and by personal resentment, to adopt a line of conduct, which in my cooler moments I may regret." He maintained this honourable and truly patriotic resolution; and thus proved himself worthy of the highest eulogium.

Death.

He passed the evening of his days in the pursuit of rural occupations and agricultural experiments; his improvements ameliorated the state of husbandry, his hospitality endeared him to his neighbours, and the dignity of his character insured respect. Apprehensive of being tempted again to enter into those scenes of active life, which he had resolved totally to abandon, he never revisited the capital, but died at Rainham, in 1738, aged 64.

Notwithstanding the asperity with which this contest was conducted, the brothers seem to have renounced their friendship without forfeiting their esteem for each other. Townshend did not indulge in peevish expressions against his successful rival, and Sir Robert Walpole never blamed the ministerial conduct or depreciated the abilities of lord Townshend. He was always unwilling to enter into the causes of their disunion; when an intimate friend pressed

him

him on the subject some years afterwards, he made several attempts to evade the question, and at length replied, "It is difficult to trace the causes of a dispute between statesmen, but I will give you the history in a few words; as long as the firm of the house was Townshend and Walpole, the utmost harmony prevailed; but it no sooner became Walpole and Townshend, than things went wrong, and a separation ensued *.

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1750.

* The contents of this chapter are derived from the letters in the Correspondence.—Btough's Papers.—The late Earl of Hardwicke's Memorandums.—Maty's Life of Lord Chester-

field.—Communications from the late earl of Orford, lord Sydney, and his brother Charles Townshend, esquire,

PERIOD THE FIFTH:

From the Resignation of Lord TOWNSHEND, to the Dissolution
of the Parliament.

1730—1734.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-EIGHTH:

1730—1731.

Walpole inclines to a Reconciliation with the Emperor.—Negotiations which preceded and terminated in the Treaty of Vienna.—Treaty of Seville carried into Execution.—Transactions in Parliament.—General Satisfaction.—Character of Earl Waldegrave, the new Ambassador at Paris.

Walpole con-
ducts foreign
affairs.

THE resignation of Townshend placed Walpole in a new point of view. Hitherto he had taken no public part in foreign affairs, and had only indirectly influenced the current negotiations, either through the private interposition of the queen, or the medium of his brother, and he affected to leave the sole direction of those matters to the secretary of state. But the removal of Townshend instantly changed his situation. The duke of Newcastle for some time continued to act the same subordinate part as before; and the new secretary, lord Harrington, received his impulse from the minister of the finance, or from his brother Horace. Walpole, therefore, now took a more open and decided place in the regulation of foreign transactions, and his opinion seems to have principally contributed to the renewal of the
ancient

ancient connection with the house of Austria, with whom England had been so long in a state of open defiance.

He had sagaciously appreciated the advantages which resulted to England from the alliance with France, was convinced, that an union with that power had effectually hurt the cause of the Pretender, and counteracted the schemes of the Jacobites. He was aware that France, during the minority of Louis the Fifteenth, or under the government of a prime minister like Cardinal Fleury, of a pacific and timid disposition, was a very proper ally in a defensive treaty, to check and prevent the designs of the Emperor, who had formed schemes and alliances detrimental to the security and commerce of England. He well knew that ministers of a free nation must sometimes be obliged to contract new engagements, in opposition to those powers with whom they would have been willing to have lived in the strictest friendship, upon just and honourable terms*.

He had therefore concurred with Townshend, in warmly promoting the alliance with France, and was not deterred by the popular outcry, that the measures of the cabinet were directed to lower our natural ally, the house of Austria, and exalt France, our natural enemy, from pursuing a plan which secured to England internal tranquillity and external peace. The improvement of our commerce and manufactures were a full justification of this wise measure.

But things were now considerably changed. The solid establishment of the house of Hanover on the throne of Great Britain, and the number of Jacobites who, on the quiet accession of George the Second, renounced their principles, had lessened the danger of internal commotions, and rendered the co-operation of France in favour of the Pretender, less an object of alarm.

The relative situation of France was no less changed. Morville, the friend of England, had been dismissed from the office of secretary of state, and his successor, Chauvelin, the enemy of England, governed Cardinal Fleury. A reconciliation had taken place between France and Spain, and the ancient jealousy between France and England began to revive on both sides.

In consequence of this alteration of circumstances, France acted from policy an indecisive and wavering part. When the Emperor, in opposition to the arrangements made by the allies of Seville, had declared, that if Spanish troops should enter Tuscany, he would drive them out, it became necessary

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Promotes a
reconciliation
with the
Emperor.

State of the
French cabi-
net.

* The Interest of Great Britain steadily pursued, p. 26.

either

Period V. 1730 to 1734. either to force him to execute that treaty, or to prevail upon him, by the guaranty of his favourite object, the pragmatic sanction. Cardinal Fleury affected to co-operate with England, in obtaining the consent of the Emperor, either by force or persuasive means; but artfully threw obstacles in the way of both. Various schemes for effecting that end were proposed. It was the great object of England to prevent the invasion of the Low Countries, and to confine principally the seat of war to Sicily, or at least to Italy. It was the view of the French to extend it to the other parts of the Austrian dominions, under the hopes of making conquests on the side of Germany and the Low Countries.

When the two nations were actuated with such different views, no coincidence of opinion could be expected. France objected to all schemes, either of compulsion or compromise, and endeavoured to throw the blame of inactivity on the English and Dutch. Meanwhile Spain complained bitterly that the treaty of Seville was not executed, and that Parma and Tuscany, for the attainment of which she had acceded to the quadruple alliance, were on the point of being lost.

Negotiations
at Vienna.

Walpole now perceived that the strict alliance with France would no longer be maintained. He had two objects in view, the one, according to his own expressions, to avoid a war with the Emperor, for fear of its consequences, and the other with Spain, on account of our trade, and the only method of effecting both these purposes was to renew the ancient connection with the house of Austria, and to lure the Emperor to accede to the treaty of Seville, with the promise of guarantying the pragmatic sanction.

On these interesting topics he maintained a correspondence with his brother, Horace Walpole, ambassador at Paris; combated his opinion in favour of continuing the friendship with France, and gradually brought him over to approve a negotiation with the house of Austria.

The Emperor had, before the treaty of Seville, endeavoured to open a separate negotiation with England, and since its conclusion had thrown out hints to our ambassador at Vienna, that a thorough reconciliation might easily be effected. In consequence of these insinuations, the British cabinet decided on making the attempt, and lord Harrington announced this resolution in an official dispatch to Mr. Robinson, who had succeeded earl Waldegrave in the embassy to Vienna*.

An answer being transmitted, that the Imperial court was inclined, with every appearance of sincerity on their part, to renew their ancient connection with

* September 14-25, 1730. Correspondence, Period V.

England;

England, on fair and reasonable conditions, farther instructions were forwarded from the secretary of state, together with the plans of treaties and declarations to be signed by the Emperor, both in regard to the disputes with England, and to the king's German affairs*.

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While this negotiation was pending, the delay gave such umbrage to the king of Spain, that he declared, by the Marquis of Castillar, his ambassador at Paris, that he considered himself free from all engagements contracted on his part by the treaty of Seville, and at full liberty to adopt such measures as should be most suitable to his interests.

Jan. 29.

Soon after these transactions, the duke of Parma died; the duchess, his widow, declared herself pregnant: the Emperor, with the secret connivance of England, took possession of Parma, making at the same time a declaration, that if the duchess should be delivered of a son, the introduction of the Spanish troops should take place; if of a daughter, Don Carlos should instantly receive the investiture of Parma and Placentia, from the Emperor and empire.

Death of the duke of Parma.

In opening this negotiation, the British cabinet had declared it to be the determined resolution of the king to make the treaty of Seville the basis of the new alliance, and the securing to Don Carlos the succession to Tuscany and Parma was held out as an indispensable article. The minister was aware that the best method to obtain peace was to be prepared for war, and that the only successful means for carrying the treaty of Seville into effect, were to be ready to enforce its execution by vigorous measures. The speech which the king delivered from the throne on the meeting of parliament, was drawn up by him in conformity with these sentiments. After declaring, that every measure was adopted to prevent, by an accommodation, the fatal consequences of a general rupture; and that it was impossible to state the supplies which would be required for the current service of the year, until peace or war should be decided upon, it concluded with these strong expressions:

Parliamentary proceedings.

Jan. 21.

"The time draws near, which will admit of no farther delays. If the tranquillity of Europe can be settled without the effusion of blood, or the expence of public treasure, that situation will certainly be most happy and desirable. But if that blessing cannot be obtained, honour, justice, and the sacred faith due to solemn treaties, will call upon us to exert ourselves, in procuring by force, what cannot be had upon just and reasonable terms†."

The negotiation was carried on with so much address and secrecy, that al-

* Lord Harrington to Mr. Robinson, Dec. 4-15, 1730.

† Journals.
though

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though some rumour of it had transpired, and hints had been thrown out in the Craftsman, yet the debate on the side of the minority was conducted on a supposition, that England was preparing for a war with the Emperor, to execute the treaty of Seville by force, and an amendment to the address was proposed, that the king should be requested not to concur in a war against the Emperor, either in Flanders or on the Rhine. But when this proposition was negatived, a more plausible amendment was suggested by opposition (who artfully availed themselves of the prejudice conceived against the king for his attachment to Hanover) they proposed to insert, that they would support his majesty's engagements, so far as they related to the interest of Great Britain. In answer to this proposal, Walpole did not hesitate to declare, "That such an expression in their address would seem to insinuate, that the king had entered into engagements that did not relate to the interests of Great Britain, which would be a great instance of ingratitude towards the king, who in all his measures had never shewed the least regard to any thing but the interest of Great Britain, and the ease and security of the people; as all those who had the honour to serve him could testify, and upon their honour declare; that he hoped every member of that house was convinced, that the king would never enter into any engagement that was not absolutely necessary for procuring the happiness and insuring the safety of his subjects, and therefore it was quite unnecessary to confine the words of their address to such engagements as related to the interest of Great Britain *."

Nothing was said directly in answer to this assertion, though so much might have been said. It was only urged, that to support any hostile operations against the Emperor on the Rhine, was absolutely destructive to the interests of Great Britain, tending to the total subversion of the balance of power; that the house had good reason to believe that no minister would dare to advise the king to such a measure; and the member who used these strong expressions, concluded by opposing the amendment as unnecessary, the address was therefore carried without a division. It was also drawn up by the minister, and after acknowledging, in terms of gratitude, the king's goodness, "in endeavouring to have the conditions of the treaty of Seville fulfilled and executed, in such manner as might best secure a general pacification, and be conformable to his engagements with his allies," declared "that they would, with all cheerfulness, grant such supplies as should be necessary for the service of the ensuing year, and effectually enable the king to make good his engagements †."

Unanimity
and zeal.

The unanimity and vigour of this address, which was equally adopted by

* Chandler.

† Ibid.

the

the house of peers, had a great effect on the transactions abroad, and gave energy to the negotiations at Vienna.

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In consequence of the adoption of these measures, lord Harrington expressed to the British minister at Vienna, the king's disapprobation of the delays and obstacles with which the Imperial court clogged the progress of the negotiations, replied to the counter project of the Emperor, gave farther instructions, and sent the ultimatum of the cabinet.

Obstructions
to the Aus-
trian alliance.

Notwithstanding these remonstrances, the ministry well knew that the obstacles were derived no less from the pertinacity of the Hanoverian, than the haughtiness of the Imperial court, and one of the great difficulties which occurred in concluding an accommodation, arose from blending the affairs of Germany with those of England.

Robinson had been particularly ordered * "to continue the greatest friendship and confidence towards Dieden, the Hanoverian agent at Vienna, and act in perfect concert with him in every thing, wherein the king's interests were concerned: And to employ his best offices and instances with the Imperial ministers, for procuring the most effectual redress and satisfaction to the king upon the several demands which Dieden was instructed to make for that purpose to the court of Vienna."

These objects of contention between the Emperor and the king, as elector of Hanover, were so various, complicated, and delicate, that the treaty would never have been concluded, had the British minister at Vienna insisted, according to his official orders, upon a full and satisfactory answer to all the points in dispute. Fortunately, the cabinet of London, influenced by Walpole, had the courage to cut the Gordian knot, which it could not un-

Removed.

loose; lord Harrington, in a private letter, instructed Mr. Robinson † to sign the treaty with England, and to refer the German affairs to a future decision.

Farther diffi-
culties obvi-
ated.

* Grantham Papers. Dispatch from lord Harrington to Mr. Robinson, 1st December, 1730. Correspondence.

† Lord Harrington to Mr. Robinson. January 28th, February 8th, 1731. Correspondence.

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who had long held a private intercourse of letters with the Emperor or his ministers.

This false opinion, together with the difficulty of settling the German affairs, suspended the signature of the treaty. In this moment of doubt and uncertainty, a letter * from Horace Walpole to Mr. Robinson, conveying the strongest assurances of his own and his brother's sentiments in favour of the Emperor, decided the Imperial cabinet, and hastened the conclusion.

Second treaty of Vienna.

The treaty was signed on the 16th of March, and is usually called the second treaty of Vienna, to distinguish it from that which was concluded in 1725. It was a defensive alliance, and stipulated a reciprocal guaranty of mutual rights and possessions; on the part of England, to guaranty the Emperor's succession, according to the pragmatic sanction; on that of the Emperor, to abolish the Ostend company, and all trade to the East Indies, from any part of the Austrian Netherlands, to secure the succession of Don Carlos to Parma and Tuscany, and not to oppose the introduction of Spanish Garrisons.

Effects of the treaty.

Thus was this great and difficult task of preventing a general war, accomplished with an address and secrecy that reflected high honour on those who conducted it. The treaty of Seville was carried into execution without force, and without breach of faith to any other power: to Don Carlos Parma was secured, with the consent of the Emperor, and the eventual succession of Tuscany guaranteed; Spain was satisfied with England; and the Emperor, gratified with the guaranty of the pragmatic sanction, considered this union as the commencement of a new æra to the house of Austria.

The satisfaction in England was full and complete. In fact, no event more disconcerted opposition, or raised the minister higher in the estimation of the public. It had long been a favourite theme of popular declamation, that his measures had a tendency to lower the house of Austria, and to exalt the power of France. Their arguments were therefore now turned against themselves; the breach of the French alliance, and reconciliation with Austria, took away one plausible topic of raillery and invective.

Objections of opposition.

The only popular objection to the management of foreign affairs now was, that England was entangled in a multiplicity of treaties and guaranties; that no rupture could take place in Europe, in which we should not be obliged to interfere as principals; that it was the steady interest of Great Britain to contract no burthenome engagements, to trust to her naval strength and insular situation for repelling all foreign attempts, and give no just offence to any of the powers of Europe.

* February 9-20, 1731. Correspondence.

To this general objection a general answer was returned; that a nation, whose strength depends upon the flourishing state of trade and credit, (inseparable from that of public tranquillity) whose commerce extends itself to all parts of the world, and is founded on compacts and stipulations with powers of different and incompatible interests; who has as many enviers as neighbours, as numerous rivals as there are commercial powers, must have a more extensive and particular interest to foresee and obviate those troubles, which, if not prevented in time, might occasion great disturbances, might place so large a share of dominion in the hands of one prince, as to endanger the liberties of the rest, and consequently interrupt her trade. A people thus situated, must provide themselves with foreign support, proportionable to the attempts that may be apprehended from foreign powers to their prejudice, which cannot possibly be secured but by reciprocal engagements on their part, and by interesting themselves as deeply in the welfare and security of other nations, as they expect those nations to interest themselves on their behalf.

This compact having secured the consent of the Emperor to the introduction of Spanish troops, Philip revoked the marquis de Castelar's declaration, and acceded to the new treaty of Vienna; and the execution of it, which speedily followed, proved the sincerity of the Imperial and British courts. After a few altercations between the Emperor and Don Carlos, the one claiming Parma as an inheritance, and the other insisting on conferring it as a fief of the empire, the Spanish troops landed at Leghorn, on the 20th of October, under convoy of the British and Spanish fleet. Don Carlos himself arrived there on the 26th of December, and was put in full possession of Parma and Placentia.

In opening this negotiation, Walpole had been anxious not to irritate France, before he had conciliated the court of Vienna. He judged it prudent to send in the place of his brother Horace, who had returned from his embassy at Paris, a person agreeable to Cardinal Fleury, and in whom he could implicitly confide. Lord Chesterfield had been recommended for that post, as a prelude to his being appointed secretary of state; but Horace Walpole represented to his brother, that his temper and habits would not accord with those of the Cardinal, and suggested the earl of Waldegrave, as more proper for so delicate a situation, who was accordingly nominated.

James earl of Waldegrave was descended from an ancient family in Northamptonshire, whose ancestors may be traced in a direct line to times anterior to the conquest. They were lords of the towns of Waldegrave,

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Answered.

Treaty of
Seville carried
into execution.Character
and embassy
of the earl of
Waldegrave.

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1730 to 1737.

Answered.

Treaty of
Seville carried into execution.

Character
and embassy
of the earl of
Waldegrave.

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Twywell and Slipton, in the county of Northampton *; Sir Richard Waldegrave was speaker of the house of commons in 1382; and some of his ancestors received the estates of Navestock and Borely, in Essex, and Chewton in Somersetshire, as grants from Henry the Eighth.

In 1643 Sir Edward Waldegrave was made a baronet, and his great grandson, Sir Henry Waldegrave, was created, in 1685, a peer, by the title of baron Waldegrave, of Chewton †, in Somersetshire, where the family then principally resided. On the revolution he followed the fortunes of James the Second, whose natural daughter, Henrietta, by Arabella Churchill, he had espoused, and to whom he had many and great obligations. He died at Paris in 1689.

His eldest son and successor James, of whom we are now treating, was born in 1684, and educated in the Roman Catholic religion. In 1722 he entered into the communion of the church of England, and took his seat in the house of peers. His uncle, the duke of Berwick, being desirous to mortify him for having renounced his faith, inquired of him whether he had made his abjuration from political or religious motives, and made use of the expression, *confess* the truth, to which he replied, I changed my religion to avoid *confession*.

When it was thought necessary to send an ambassador to Vienna, for the purpose of executing the articles agreed upon in the preliminaries signed between England, France, and the Emperor at Paris, and of conciliating the Emperor, who had been dissatisfied with the king of England, lord Waldegrave was selected as the person whose mild and affable demeanour best qualified

* As the account of the Waldegrave family given by Collins, is incorrect in many particulars, a more accurate statement is here added from family documents, communicated by the countess of Waldegrave. "Waldegrave, a Saxon by lineal descent, lord of the county of Northampton, had at the conquest one only daughter, and her he married, by the conqueror's commandment, to Guerin or Warin de Waldegrave of Normandie, by means of which marriage, Waldegrave the Saxon had a pardon granted him by the conqueror, of his life and land, notwithstanding he bore arms against him at Battle Abbey, on king Harold's part, which pardon is yet extant, and was lately in the hands of the lords of the manor of Waldegrave, &c. in the county of Northampton. This town

and manor was sold by Sir William Waldegrave, knight, in the reign of king Henry the Eighth."

Waldegrave is of Saxon derivation, from *Walde*, and *Grave*, signifying the ruler of a *Walde* or forest. The ancestors of the present earl resided in different counties at different periods. A Sir Richard Waldegrave, who was speaker of the house of commons in 1382, married the heiress of Sylvester of Buers, in the county of Suffolk, and either himself or some of his descendants, more than once represented that county.—The grants of Navestock, Borely, and Chewton, probably occasioned the sale of the family inheritance in Northamptonshire.

† Collins's Peerage. Collinson's History of Somersetshire.—Article Chewton.

him

him for that negotiation. George the First, who considered the mission as too great a condescension after the ill usage he had received from the Emperor, sent word that he approved the person, though he disliked the errand*.

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Lord Waldegrave set out in May 1727, and arrived at Paris on the 14th of June. The difficulty of settling the complicated negotiations, and the events which followed the death of George the First, detained him in France nearly a year. He went to Vienna in April 1728. During his residence in that capital, he corrected the mistatement which the opposition in England had transmitted of their strength, and of the weakness of the party that espoused the measures of government; and plainly shewed that the divisions in the cabinet would not diminish the weight and influence of Great Britain abroad. He proved to the Imperial ministers, that the preliminaries with Spain contained no conditions hostile to the house of Austria, and were strictly conformable to the articles of the quadruple alliance. He threw out hopes to the Emperor of a future accommodation with England, and that the guaranty of the pragmatic sanction might be the consequence of his acceding to the introduction of Spanish garrisons into Parma and Leghorn. He obtained a ratification of the preliminary articles between the Emperor, England, and France, and laid the foundation of the reconciliation, which Sir Thomas Robinson, afterwards lord Grantham, carried into execution. He then returned to Paris, where he was appointed ambassador extraordinary on the resignation of Horace Walpole.

He filled this difficult employment ten years, during a period in which the disunion between France and England was gradually increasing into an open rupture.

For his services at Vienna, he was created viscount Chewton and earl of Waldegrave, and his exertions at Paris were rewarded with the garter. In 1740 he obtained leave to return for the recovery of his health. He embarked for England, October 1740, and died at his seat at Navestock in Essex, on the 11th of April 1741, in the 57th year of his age.

He was in high confidence with Sir Robert Walpole, and was the foreign ambassador in whom the minister, next to his brother, principally confided. Several letters which passed between them, and are printed in the correspondence, prove the truth of this assertion. He conducted himself in his embassies with consummate address, and particularly dis-

* Earl of Waldegrave's Diary.

tinguished

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tinguished himself by obtaining secret information in times of emergency. Though a man of pleasure, he pursued business, when business was necessary, with indefatigable diligence. His letters are written with great spirit, perspicuity, and good sense, and are peculiarly entertaining. He had so little the appearance of a man of business, that he was considered as incapable of writing such excellent dispatches as he transmitted to England, and they were principally attributed to his secretary, Mr. Thompson. But this unjust imputation was soon proved to be false, when the ambassador left France, and the secretary remained chargé d'affaires. The inferiority of his letters, to those which were written during Waldegrave's embassy, was striking, and carried a full conviction, that they were of his own composition. I am enabled also to do justice to the abilities of the earl of Waldegrave in this respect. A complete collection of his letters and dispatches, from 1727 to 1740, is preserved at Navestock, and the greater number are original draughts written in his own hand, with such erasures and alterations as fully prove that they were solely his composition. They do honour to his diplomatic talents, and prove sound sense, an insinuating address, and elegant manners.

Suspensions of
France.

The renewal of the ancient alliance with the house of Austria, had greatly displeased the French cabinet, and particularly disgusted cardinal Fleury, whose sentiments were always inclined to the adoption of pacific measures, who (however influenced by the counsels of Chauvelin) was convinced that the peace of Europe had been principally owing to the union between France and England, who appreciated the sentiments of Sir Robert Walpole as congenial to his own, and who from long habits of intimacy and confidence, had contracted a partiality for Horace Walpole, which he was unwilling to relinquish. He considered this alliance as a prelude to incessant bickerings and future contests; and, being well acquainted with the domineering spirit of the house of Austria, and the eagerness of Charles the Sixth, to obtain from all the powers of Europe, the guaranty of the pragmatic sanction, suspected that his assent to the treaty of Vienna was purchased with a promise on the part of England, to compel France to accede to that guaranty, and expressed in strong terms of indignation, his apprehension of secret articles derogatory to the interests of France.

The candid answer of the British cabinet, conveyed through the earl of Waldegrave, removed the jealousies of the cardinal. The king and cabinet in England, had now adopted, however unwillingly, the principles of the pacific minister, and De-la Faye, under secretary of state, spoke the sentiments of Walpole, when he observed, that no one but a person totally ignorant

ignorant of the British constitution, could for a moment have entertained such an opinion. The king, he remarked, could not engage in war without money, and must apply to parliament for supplies, if such a misfortune should occur. The parliament, who spoke the voice of the nation, might be induced to grant supplies for the purpose of keeping out the Pretender, protecting merchants, preserving trade, or maintaining Gibraltar; but it would have been a monstrous conduct to have proposed an annual supply of five millions for the purpose of compelling France to guaranty the pragmatic sanction. The nation could never bear such a proposition, and the minister who had the folly to make it, would justly incur the indignation of the people*.

The earl of Waldegrave being recalled from Vienna, it became necessary to depute a person of confidence to that court, on whom the Walpoles could no less implicitly depend; nor can a greater proof of their superior ascendancy in the cabinet be given, than that Mr. Robinson was the person who was chosen to fill this important situation at this critical juncture.

Thomas Robinson, knight of the bath, and afterwards lord Grantham, was fourth son of Sir William Robinson, baronet, of the county of York, by Mary, daughter of George Aislaby, of Studley Royal. He was brought up at Westminster school, and completed his education at Trinity College, Cambridge, of which he became a fellow in 1719. In 1723, he accompanied Horace Walpole as secretary to the embassy at Paris, and was distinguished by him with the highest marks of confidence and esteem; under his instructions, and from his example, he acquired a consummate experience in diplomatic concerns. During the absence of the ambassador, he was entrusted with the management of the English affairs in France, and conducted himself with so much address and ability, that he was not duped even by the affected candour of cardinal Fleury, nor deluded by the artifices of Chauvelin. Great command of temper, patience of contradiction, dignity of manner, frankness in receiving, and quickness in answering objections, rendered him peculiarly adapted to counteract the chicanery of the Imperial court, to soften the domineering and punctilious character of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, and to conciliate the discordant tempers of the four ministers of the conference†. He continued minister at the court of Vienna from 1730 to 1748, when he was deputed ambassador and joint plenipotentiary with the earl of Sandwich, to conclude the peace of Aix la Chapelle.

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1730 to 1731.

Removed.

Mission and
character of
Mr. Robin-
son.

* De la Faye to the earl of Waldegrave, August 16th, 1731. Correspondence.

† Prince Eugene, count Zinzendorf, count Staremberg, and the bishop of Bamberg.

His

Period V.

1730 to 1734.

His dispatches are clear and perspicuous, so explicit and descriptive, as to convey a faithful picture of the tempers and characters of those with whom he negotiated; and it was truly said of him, that he not only set down every word that was uttered in his conferences with the Imperial ministers, but noted even their looks and gestures. These interesting documents contain a copious, and almost uninterrupted narrative of the transactions between England and the court of Vienna, during a period of eighteen years, big with events, that threatened the downfall of the house of Austria, which was averted by the heroism of Maria Theresa, and the interposition of England. In 1742 he was made knight of the Bath, and soon after the conclusion of the peace of Aix la Chapelle, returned to England. He was successively appointed lord of trade, master of the great wardrobe, and secretary of state. In 1761 he was created a peer, by the title of lord Grantham, and died in 1770, aged seventy-three.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-NINTH:

1731.

Biographical Memoirs of William Pulteney.—Origin and Progress of his Misunderstanding with Walpole.

TWO errors are principally to be avoided by an author, that undertakes to write the life of a minister, who directed, during so long a period, the helm of government, and whose conduct materially affected the interests of Great Britain and the fate of Europe. The first is such a bias of affection and partiality, as to draw a panegyric rather than a history; the second, an indiscriminate prejudice against those who headed the opposition; and who, because they were enemies to Sir Robert Walpole, have been held forth by his partisans, as devoid of all principle, and using, in every instance, their reprobation to his measures, as a cloak for malice and rancour. This last is the usual

usual error of biographers; and yet it appears extraordinary to a candid mind, that in order to raise the character of one great man, it should seem necessary to debase all his opponents; and that no allowance should be made for difference of opinion, or inveterate habits and prepossessions. Because the party writers of opposition have loaded Walpole with invective, is it just to asperse his adversaries with equal virulence?

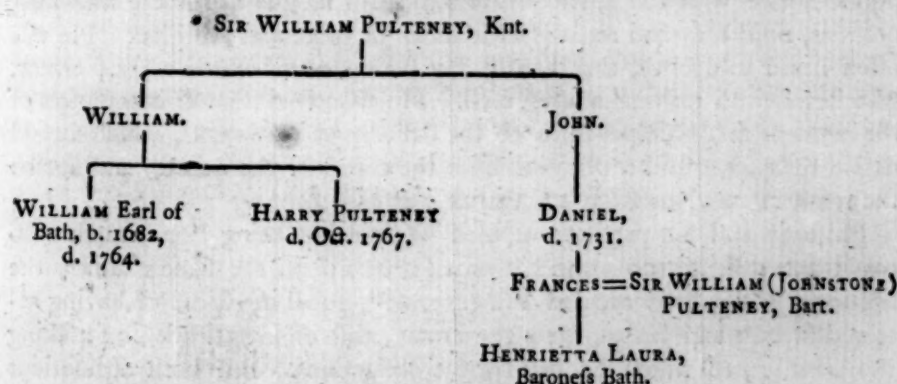
But in no instance has prejudice been carried to a greater height, than in drawing the character and conduct of Pulteney, the great leader of opposition. He, above all others, has been exposed to the fiery ordeal of party; not only by the friends of the minister whom he drove from the helm, but also by those who were once joined with him, and who, discontented at the disposal of offices on the change of administration, railed at their former leader, because they were not promoted to those places which they claimed as the reward of their long perseverance.

William Pulteney* was descended from an ancient family, who took their surname from a place of that appellation in Leicestershire. His grandfather, Sir William Pulteney, was member of parliament for the city of Westminster, and highly distinguished himself in the house of commons for his manly and spirited eloquence.

Family,
birth, and
education of
Pulteney.

Of his father, William Pulteney, I find little upon record, except his birth, marriage, and death.

William Pulteney†, his eldest son, was born in 1682, received his education at Westminster school, where he greatly improved in classical



† I am indebted to the kindness of the bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Douglas) for some of these anecdotes, which relate to the early part of Mr. Pulteney's life.

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Comes into
parliament.

literature; and being removed to Christ Church, Oxford, so highly distinguished himself by his talents and industry, that he was appointed, by dean Aldric, to make the congratulatory speech to queen Anne, on her visit to the college.

Having travelled through various parts of Europe, he returned to his native country, with a mind highly improved; and soon after his return, came into parliament for the borough of Heydon, in Yorkshire, by the interest of Mr. Guy, his protector and great benefactor.

Being descended from a Whig family, and educated in revolution principles, the young senator warmly espoused that party, and during the whole reign of queen Anne opposed the measures of the Tories.

He first spoke in the house on the place bill, which he warmly supported, and some amendments being made by the lords, the discussion was, by the intervention of the ministry, postponed for three days; during which interval, means were found to gain over several who had opposed the bill, and the amendments seemed likely to be carried.

The young senator, indignant at this apostacy, and irritated that several had, in a few days, totally changed their opinions, animadverted in a few words on such political baseness; and alluding to Sir James Montague*, who after having distinguished himself in opposition to the amendments, now voted for them, observed, "Cerberus has received his sop, and barks no more;" a remark which struck the house as ready and pertinent.

He had formed a just notion, that no young member ought to press into public notice with too much forwardness, and fatigue the house with long orations, until they had acquired the habit of order and precision. He was often heard to declare, that hardly any person ever became a good orator, who began with making a set speech. He conceived that circumstances of the moment should impel them to the delivery of sentiments, which should derive their tenor and application from the course of the debate, and not be the result of previous study or invariable arrangement.

Fortune.

Pulteney and his partisans accused Walpole of being "a wretch who could not raise £. 100 upon his own security;" in the same manner, the advocates of Walpole accused Pulteney, with equal injustice, of having received favours and bribes from the crown, and of ingratitude in forsaking the minister, to whom he owed great obligations. But both accusations were equally devoid of truth. Pulteney inherited from his father a very con-

* Afterwards solicitor and attorney general.

siderable

siderable estate, and had from Henry Guy, the intimate friend of his grandfather, and guardian of his youth, and who had been secretary to the treasury, a legacy of £. 40,000, and an estate of £. 500 a year. He received also with his wife Anna Maria, daughter of John Gumley, of Isleworth, a very large portion, and increased this property, by the most rigid œconomy, which his enemies called avarice; but which did not prevent him from performing many acts of charity and beneficence.

During the whole reign of queen Anne, Pulteney uniformly espoused the side of the Whigs; and supported, both by his eloquence and fortune, the protestant succession in the house of Hanover. On the prosecution of Sacheverel, he ably distinguished himself in the house of commons, in defence of the revolution, against the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. When the Tories came into power, in 1710, he was so obnoxious to them, that his uncle, John Pulteney, was removed from the board of trade. He not only took a principal share in the debates of the four last years of queen Anne, while the Whigs were in opposition, but was also admitted into the most important secrets of his party, at that critical time, when the succession of the Hanover family being supposed to be in danger, its friends thought themselves obliged to engage in very bold enterprises to secure it. He was a liberal subscriber to a very unprofitable and hazardous loan, then secretly negotiated by the Whig party, for the use of the Emperor, to encourage him to refuse co-operating with the Tory administration in making the peace of Utrecht.

On the prosecution of Walpole for high breach of trust and corruption, Pulteney vindicated his friend in a very elegant speech; and on his commitment to the Tower, was amongst those who paid frequent visits to the prisoner, whom he, with the rest of the Whigs, considered as a martyr to their cause*. He also engaged with Walpole in defending the Whig administration, and wrote the ironical dedication to the earl of Oxford, prefixed to Walpole's account of the parliament, which I have before taken notice of.

Soon after the death of queen Anne, and before a message had been received from George the First, Pulteney, in answer to those who opposed the clause moved by Horace Walpole, for giving £. 100,000 for apprehending the Pretender should he land, or attempt to land, in any of the king's dominions,

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1731.

Parliamentary conduct.

* Pulteney's Answer.

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1730 to 1734.

observed, "That the protestant succession was in danger, as long as there was a popish Pretender, who had many friends both at home and abroad; that the late queen was sensible of that danger, when she issued her proclamation against him; and that the case was not altered by her demise: that the nation would be at no charge if the Pretender did not attempt to land, and if he did, £. 100,000 would be well bestowed to apprehend him *.

Appointed
secretary at
war.

His parliamentary abilities and uniformity of conduct gave him a very honourable claim to distinction on the accession of George the First. Accordingly, on the king's arrival, and before a meeting of the new parliament, he was appointed privy counsellor and secretary at war, even in opposition to the inclination of the duke of Marlborough, who, as commander in chief, thought himself entitled to recommend to that post †. He was chosen a member of the committee of secrecy, nominated by the house of commons to examine and report the substance of the papers relating to the negotiation for peace, and on the suppression of the rebellion which broke out in Scotland, he moved for the impeachment of lord Widdrington, and opposed the motion to address the king, for a proclamation, offering a general pardon to all who were in arms in Scotland, who should lay their arms down within a certain time.

He was at this period so much connected with Stanhope and Walpole, that in allusion to the triple alliance between Great Britain, France, and Holland, which was then negotiating by general Stanhope, secretary of state, they were called the three *grand allies*; and a proverbial saying was current, "are you come into the triple alliance ‡?"

Resigns.

But when Stanhope and Walpole took different sides, on the schism between the Whigs, when Townshend was dismissed, and Walpole resigned, Pulteney followed his friends example, and gave up his place of secretary at war.

Origin of his
disagreement
with Wal-
pole.

When Walpole made a reconciliation between the king and the prince of Wales, and negotiated with Sunderland to form a new administration, in which he and lord Townshend bore the most conspicuous part, then were first sown those seeds of disgust and discontent which afterwards burst forth.

The causes of this unfortunate misunderstanding, may be traced from the authority of the parties themselves, or their particular friends. Pulteney was offended because Walpole had negotiated with the prince of Wales and Sunderland, without communicating the progress to him, although he had

* Tindal, vol. 18. p. 298.

† Letter to Pulteney, p. 29.

‡ Memoirs of the Life and Conduct of William Pulteney, esq. p. 17.

told it to Mr. Edgecumbe, who indiscreetly gave an account daily to Pulteney*.

Chapter 39.

1731.

Another cause of disgust was, that Pulteney, who had hitherto invariably proved his attachment to Townshend and Walpole, expected to receive some important employment, whereas he was only offered a peerage, and when he declined it, more than two years elapsed, before any farther overtures were made; and though Pulteney at length solicited † and obtained the office of cofferer of the household, in the room of the earl of Godolphin, who received a pension of £. 5,000 per annum to make way for him, he deemed that place far below his just expectations.

Made cofferer of the household.

Notwithstanding, however, these secret causes of disgust, Pulteney continued to support the administration. On the communication of the plot in which bishop Atterbury was involved, he moved for an address to congratulate the king on the discovery of so dangerous and unnatural a confederacy. He was chairman of the committee appointed by the house of commons in the prosecution; and the report which he drew up on that occasion, is a masterpiece of perspicuity and order. But the disdainful manner in which he conceived he had been treated by Walpole, had made too deep an impression on his mind to be eradicated. Finding that he did not possess the full

Chairman of the secret committee.

* The account of this transaction is thus given by Pulteney himself, several years afterwards, when he was in the height of opposition. "You sent to him one day, as he was going out of town, desiring to speak with him, that, when he came, you told him of the reconciliation between the late k— and the then p— of W—; and that a bargain was made for those Whigs, who had resigned their employments, to be put in again by degrees. To this the gentleman replied, 'Who pray is it, that hath had authority to make this bargain?' Your answer was, 'I have done it with the ministry, and it was insisted on that nobody but lord Townshend should know of the transaction. Neither lord Cowper, the Speaker, nor any one else knew it; and therefore we hope you will not take it amiss, that it was kept secret from you.'—'Not I,' said the gentleman, 'but I think it very odd, that any one should presume to take a plenary authority upon himself, to deal for such numbers as were concerned, in an affair of this consequence.'—'We have not,' said you again, 'had our own interests alone in view. We have bargained for all

our friends, and in due time they will be provided for. I am to be, said you, at the head of the treasury. Lord Sunderland had a great desire to retain the disposition of the secret service money to himself; but I would by no means consent to that, knowing the chief power of a minister (and I presume his profit also) depends on the disposition of it.' You named several others, who were to come into employments; and said to this gentleman, 'We know, Sir, that you do not value any thing of that kind; so we have obtained a peerage for you.' It seems you did not, at that time, pretend that the gentleman either expected, or insisted on any employment; and therefore told him, that the king had consented to make him a peer. To this the gentleman replied with some warmth, 'Sir, if ever I should be mean enough to submit to being sold, I promise you that you shall never have the selling of me. A peerage is what some time or other, I may be glad of accepting, for the sake of my family; but I will never obtain it by any base method, or submit to have it got for me on such terms by you.'"

† Pulteney's Answer.

* An Answer to one Part of a late infamous Libel, intitled "Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication of his Two honourable Patrons," p. 54, 55.

confidence.

Period V.
1730 to 1734.

Joins opposition.

Walpole attempts to conciliate him.

April 8th,
1725.

April 9th.

confidence of administration, or disapproving those measures which tended, in his opinion, to raise the power of France on the ruins of the house of Austria, and which he thought sacrificed the interests of Great Britain to those of Hanover, topics on which he afterwards expatiated with great energy and unusual eloquence in parliament, he became more and more estranged from his former friends, and expressed his disapprobation of their measures both in public and private. At length, his discontent arrived to so great a height, that he declared his resolution of attacking the minister in parliament.

Walpole perceived his error in disgusting so able an associate, and with a view to prevent his opposition to the payment of the king's debts, hinted to him in the house of commons, that at the removal of either of the secretaries of state, the ministers designed him for the vacant employment: but it was now too late. To this proposal Pulteney made no answer, but bowed and smiled, to let him know he understood his meaning*.

Pulteney now came forward as the great opposer of government, and his first exertion on the side of the minority, was on the subject of the civil list. A message being delivered from the king, by Sir Robert Walpole, praying the commons to assist him in discharging the debts of the civil list, Pulteney moved for an address, that an account should be laid before the house, of all the monies paid for secret service, pensions, bounties, &c. from the 25th of March, 1725. This address being voted, a motion was made for the house to go into a grand committee, to consider of the king's message; but Mr. Pulteney represented, "That the house having ordered an address for several papers relating to the civil list, and other expences, they ought, in his opinion, to put off the consideration of the message, till those papers were laid before the house; it being natural to inquire into the causes of a disease, before remedies are applied." This being opposed by Walpole, Pulteney replied, "That he wondered how so great a debt could be contracted in three years time; but was not surprised some persons were so eager to have the deficiencies of the civil list made good, since they and their friends had so great a share in it; and desired to know, whether this was all that was due, or whether they were to expect another reckoning?" To this it was answered in general, "That there was indeed a heavy debt on the civil list, and a great many pensions; but that most of these had been granted in king William and queen Anne's reigns; some by king Charles the Second, and very few by his present majesty. That, since the

* Pulteney's Answer, p. 51.

civil list was first settled for his majesty, an expence of above £. 90,000 per annum had happened, which could not then be foreseen, and therefore was left unprovided for. That, upon examination of the account of the civil list debts, it would appear, that most of those expences were either for the necessary support of the dignity of the crown and government, or for the public good. That there was indeed a pension of £. 5,000 of another nature, upon the account of the cofferer's place, but which could not well be avoided, for both lord Godolphin, who was in that office, and his father, had so well deserved of the government, that they could not handsomely remove him without a gratuity, and therefore they gave him a pension of £. 5,000 to make room for the worthy gentleman who now enjoys the post *."

Pulteney opposed the motion in every step, until the third reading, when he voted for the payment of the king's debts; and he himself thus accounts for his conduct in this particular: "The late king had of himself, or as he was advised by his *ministers*, frequently tried the gentleman on this point, and used to persuade him to be for it. He used all the arguments he could; urged to him all the motives he thought could possibly engage him, but all to no purpose. He continued inflexible. At length, the king said to him, *it is hard you will not let me be an honest man*. What would you, continued his majesty, *think yourself of one, who refused to pay his butcher, his baker, and other honest tradesmen?*—To this the gentleman replied, not a little affected with his majesty's last argument, *God forbid that he should prevent his majesty from acting such an honest part*. It was not his intention. *What he meant to do was consistent with his duty as a servant to his majesty, and agreeable to his duty as a representative of the people. He meant only to expose that unnecessary profusion which had been made in secret service money, pensions, &c. That the money which should have paid his honest tradesmen, was by these means diverted*. His view therefore was to get a censure of such practices, and to prevent their becoming precedents; nor had he any design of depriving the honest creditors of their just debts; and this was the reason, when it came to the last instance, why this gentleman voted for the question; which his majesty understood very well to be agreeable to the promise he had made, however mysterious it might appear to others, and which the gentleman was fully persuaded to be just in itself, and consistent with his duty as a servant to the crown †."

* Tindal, vol. 19. p. 524, 525.

† Answer to the Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication of his Two Honourable Patrons, p. 52, 53.

Period V.
1730 to 1734.
Dismissed.

Refuses to be
secretary of
state.

He was soon afterwards dismissed from his place of cofferer of the household, and from this period entered into a systematic opposition to the minister. Pulteney proved himself so formidable, that Walpole again endeavoured to gain him over, and about the time of Townshend's resignation, queen Caroline * offered him a peerage, together with the post of secretary of state for foreign affairs, if he would again join his old co-adjutor; but Pulteney rejected the offer, and declared his fixed resolution never again to act with Sir Robert Walpole.

The most violent altercations passed in the house of commons between them; their heat against each other seemed to increase in proportion with their former intimacy, and neither was deficient in sarcastic allusions, violent accusations, and virulent invectives.

On the ninth of February, 1726, Pulteney made a plausible motion for the appointment of a committee to state the public debts, as they stood on the 25th of December, 1714, with the debts which had been incurred since that time, till the 25th December 1725, distinguishing how much of the said debts had been provided for, and how much remained unprovided for by parliament. He was seconded by Daniel Pulteney, and supported by Sir Joseph Jekyl. In opposition, Walpole endeavoured to shew, that such an inquiry was unreasonable and preposterous, and that it might give a dangerous wound to public credit at this critical juncture, when monied men were already too much alarmed by the appearances of an approaching war, urging, that in the present posture of affairs, the commons could not better express their love to their country, than by making good their promises and assurances at the beginning of this session, and by raising, with the greatest dispatch, the necessary supplies, to enable the king to make good his engagements, for the welfare of his subjects, to disappoint the hopes of the enemies to his government, and to repel any insults that might be offered to his crown and dignity. Barnard, member for the city of London, confirmed the assertion of the minister, as to the danger of increasing the alarm of monied men, which had already so much affected public credit, that the stocks had within a few weeks fallen 12 or 14 per cent. Sir Thomas Pengelly having spoken for the motion, Walpole again replied; on which Pulteney declared, "That he made this motion with no other view, than to give that *great man* an opportunity to shew his integrity to the whole world, which would finish his sublime character." To this Walpole answered, "That this compliment would have come out with a better grace, and appeared more sincere, when that fine gentleman had himself a share in the manage-

* From the earl of Orford. Life of bishop Newton.

ment of the public money, than now he was out of place*. Such petulant altercations between these two able speakers, caused much dissatisfaction to those independent members who wished well to the Hanover line, and who generally supported or opposed all questions from conviction, without being influenced by party motives. This opposition of Pulteney was so apparently dictated by personal resentment, that several who would otherwise have considered the motion just and reasonable, voted against it. Many deemed it ill-timed, and calculated to hurt public credit, and to draw an odium on the house of commons, and accordingly supported the minister; for these reasons the motion was negatived by 262 against 89†.

Pulteney now placed himself at the head of the discontented Whigs; he, in conjunction with Bolingbroke, his ancient antagonist, became the principal supporter of the Craftsman, to which paper he gave many essays, and furnished hints and observations.

At this period, Pulteney was greatly courted by the foreign ministers of those powers who were displeased with the measures of the British cabinet, and by none more than by Palm, the Imperial ambassador, who caballed with the opposition, and endeavoured to overturn the ministry‡.

Courted by
foreign
powers.

The controversy in 1731, which passed between Pulteney and Walpole's friends and pamphleteers, widened the breach, and rendered it irreparable. The Craftsman was full of invectives against Walpole, and the measures of his administration. In answer to this paper, a pamphlet was published under the title of *Sedition and Defamation Displayed*; in a letter to the author of the Craftsman, with a motto from Juvenal,

Controversy
in 1731.

*Atque aliquid brevibus Gyaris, Et carcere dignum,
Si vis esse aliquis.*——

It contained a violent, and, according to the spirit of the political pamphlets of the times, a scurrilous abuse of Pulteney and Bolingbroke. The character of Pulteney is portrayed in the colours of party, in a dedication to the patrons of the Craftsman; and his opposition is wholly attributed to disappointed ambition and personal pique. In answer to this pamphlet, which he supposed to be written by lord Hervey, the great friend and supporter of Sir Robert Walpole, he wrote, "*A proper Reply to a late scurrilous Libel, intitled, Sedition and Defamation Displayed, in a Letter to the Author; by Caleb D'Anvers, of Gray's Inn, Esq.*"

In this pamphlet, Mr. Pulteney introduces the character of Sir Robert Walpole, which it must be confessed does not yield, either in scurrility or misrepresentation, to that of Pulteney, given in *Sedition and Defamation Displayed*.

* Chandler.

† Thomas Brodrick to lord chancellor Middleton, February 10, 1726. Middleton Papers. Journals.

‡ Letter from Palm to the Emperor, December 17, 1726. Correspondence.

Period V.
1730 to 1734.

In this publication, the author treated lord Hervey * with such contempt, and lashed him with such ridicule, in allusion to his effeminate appearance, as a species of half-man and half-woman, which Pope, in his character of Sporus,

* John lord Hervey, eldest son of John the first earl of Bristol, was born in 1696. He came first into parliament soon after the accession of George the First, was appointed vice-chamberlain to the king in 1730, in 1733 was created a peer, and in 1740 was constituted lord privy seal, from which post he was removed in 1742. He died in 1743. He took a considerable share in the political transactions of the times, and was always a warm advocate on the side of Sir Robert Walpole. Tindal * has observed, "that history

ought to repair the injury that party has done to some part of his character," and in fact, it is necessary; for never was man more exposed to ridicule, and lashed with greater severity, than lord Hervey has been exposed and lashed, by the satirical pen of Pope. If we may credit the satirist, who has delineated his character under the name of Sporus, he was below all contempt; a man without talents, and without one solitary virtue to compensate for the most ridiculous foibles, and the most abandoned profligacy.

"Let Sporus tremble.—A. What, that thing of filk,
"Sporus, that mere white curd of asses milk?
"Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
"Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
"P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
"This painted child of dirt, that stinks and sings, &c.
"Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
"As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
"Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
"And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
"Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
"Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad, &c.
"Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
"The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
"Fop at the toilet, flatt'ner at the board,
"Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
"Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have exprest,
"A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest,
"Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
"Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust."

However I may admire the powers of the satirist, I never could read this passage without disgust and horror; disgust at the indelicacy of the allusions, horror at the malignity of the poet, in laying the foundation of his abuse on the lowest species of satire, personal invective, and what is still worse, on sickness and debility. The poet has so much distorted this portrait, that he has in one instance made the object of his satire, what ought to have been the subject of his praise, the rigid abstinence to which lord Hervey unalterably adhered, from the necessity of preserving his health. Lord Hervey having felt some attacks of the epilepsy, entered upon, and persisted in a very strict regimen, and thus stopt

the progress, and prevented the effects of that dreadful disease. His daily food was a small quantity of asses milk, and a flour biscuit; once a week he indulged himself with eating an apple: he used emetics daily. To this rigid abstemiousness, Pope malignantly alludes, when he says,

"The mere white curd of asses milk."

In short, I agree with the ingenious editor of Pope, "Language cannot afford more glowing or more forcible terms to express the utmost bitterness of contempt. We think we are here reading Milton against Salmasius. The raillery is carried to the very verge of railing, some will say, *ribaldry*. He has armed his muse with a scalping knife."

Sporus, has no less illiberally adopted, that lord Hervey was highly offended, a duel * ensued, and Pulteney slightly wounded his antagonist. It afterwards appeared that lord Hervey did not compose this pamphlet; and Pulteney acknowledged his mistake, and imputed it, without sufficient authority, to Walpole himself †.

As one great source of obloquy vented by the ministerial writers against Pulteney, was his junction with Bolingbroke, who, when driven from his country, had espoused the party of the Pretender, a letter, by Bolingbroke, appeared in the *Craftsman*, of May 22, 1731, with the fictitious name of Old-castle, which, after heaping many charges on the minister, drew the characters of Pulteney and Bolingbroke in a most favourable light, and vindicated them from the imputations of the writers on the side of government.

This letter produced an answer, intituled, "*Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication of his Two Honourable Patrons, in his Paper of May 22, 1731.*"

Par nobile fratrum;

In which the two characters commended by the *Craftsman*, were attacked with increasing asperity, and Pulteney was loaded with the most virulent personal

May we not ask, with the same author, "Can this be the nobleman whom Middleton, in his dedication to the *History of the Life of Tully*, has so seriously, and so earnestly praised, for his strong good sense, his consummate politeness, his real patriotism, his rigid temperance, his thorough knowledge and defence of the laws of his country, his accurate skill in history, his unexampled and unremitted diligence in literary pursuits, who added credit to this very history, as Scipio and Lælius did to that of Polibius, by revising and correcting it, and brightening it, (as he expresses it) by the strokes of his pencil?" May we not also ask, Is this the nobleman who wrote some of the best political pamphlets which appeared in defence of Walpole's administration? who, though sometimes too florid and pompous, was a frequent and able speaker in parliament, and who, for his political abilities, was raised to the post of lord privy seal? In truth, lord Hervey possessed more than ordinary abilities, and much classical erudition; he was remarkable for his wit, and the number and appositeness of his repartees.

Although his manner and figure were at first acquaintance highly forbidding, yet he seldom failed to render himself, by his lively conversation, which Pope calls,

"The well whip'd cream of courtly common sense,"

an entertaining companion to those whom he

wished to conciliate. Hence he conquered the extreme prejudice which the king had conceived against him, and from being detested, he became a great favourite. He was particularly agreeable to queen Caroline, as he helped to enliven the uniformity of a court, with sprightly repartees and lively sallies of wit.

His cool and manly conduct in the duel with Pulteney, proved neither want of spirit to resent an injury, or deficiency of courage in the hour of danger, and he compelled his adversary to respect his conduct, though he had satirised his person.

His defects were extreme affectation, bitterness of invective, prodigality of flattery, and great servility to those above him.

Horace, earl of Orford, has given a list of his political writings, in the Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors; and among the Orford Papers, are draughts of several of those pamphlets which were submitted to Sir Robert Walpole. Some are corrected by him, in others, the minister made considerable additions. See Warton's *Pope*, vol. 4. p. 44, 45, 46. Opinions of Sarah duchess of Marlborough, Article, lord Hervey.

* An account of the duel is given in a letter from Thomas Pelham to earl Waldegrave, January 28, 1731. Correspondence, Period V.

† It was written by Sir William Younge, secretary at war, as he himself informed the late lord Hardwicke.

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1730 to 1734

abuse, by ransacking his private life, prying into his domestic concerns and family transactions, by accusing him of acting solely from disappointment and revenge, of being governed by veteran Jacobites, of disrespect to the king, ingratitude to the minister, of sharing the bounties, and adding to the pensions of the crown, and of having obtained the fee-simple of £. 9,000 per annum, by the favour, indulgence, and assistance of the minister, whom he had sworn to destroy *. Perhaps he would have acted a more prudent and dignified part, in not making any reply to the invective of a party pamphlet; but, as he conceived it to have been written, or at least the materials to have been furnished by the minister, his indignation was roused, and he published an animated defence of himself and his own conduct, a work to which I have frequently alluded, as containing much curious information on the origin and progress of the quarrel between him and Walpole. It is styled, *An Answer to One Part of a late infamous Libel, intituled, "Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication of his Two Honourable Patrons;" in which the character and conduct of Mr. P. is fully vindicated.* Addressing it to Sir Robert Walpole, he says of the pamphlet in which he had been so indecently abused, "There are several passages of *secret history* in it, falsely stated and misrepresented, which could come from nobody but yourself. "You might, perhaps, employ some of your mercenaries to work them up for you; but the ingredients are certainly your own."

In the course of the defence, Mr. Pulteney gives us his account of the conversation about making him secretary of state, which he accuses Walpole of having disclosed, and misrepresented. And as Walpole had thrown out to him the bait of the secretaryship, to prevent, if possible, his opposing the payment of the king's debts, the secret history of that transaction, as far as Pulteney was concerned, is laid before the public. Having gone through that part of his defence, he proceeds, "Since now we are upon the heads of *secret history, which you have opened*, I must explain another point in this gentleman's defence, concerning the reconciliation between his late majesty and the present king, from whence it will appear, whether you or this gentleman was most greedy of employments, and who discovered the truest zeal for the honour of his present majesty †." That part of his secret conversation which related to George the Second, then prince of Wales, is here subjoined.

"But pray, Sir (continued the gentleman) since you acquaint me with the terms you have made for me, what are those you have made for the P—, who hath acted so honourable and steady a part to those with whom he engaged, and who are now in opposition to the court? To this you answered with a sneer, *Why He is to go to court again, and He will have his DRUMS and his GUARDS,*

* P. 37.

† Answer to an infamous Libel, p. 53.

and

and such FINE THINGS. At this the gentleman was astonished, and thought proper to press you a little further, by asking you, *whether the P— was to be left regent again, as he had been when the king went out of England.*—No, said you, WHY SHOULD HE? *What!* replied the gentleman, *have you stipulated for a share of royalty for yourself, on the king's departure, and is the P— to live like a private subject, of no consequence in the kingdom?*—The gentleman avers, upon his honour, that your answer was this. HE DOES NOT DESERVE IT.—WE HAVE DONE TOO MUCH FOR HIM; AND IF IT WAS TO BE DONE AGAIN, WE WOULD NOT DO SO MUCH.—Upon this, the gentleman went directly to the P— (with whom he then had some credit) and humbly represented upon what terms the reconciliation was founded. He told him that he was sold to his father's ministers, by persons who considered nothing but *themselves* and their own interest, and were in haste to make their fortunes. This was thought by him to have had some weight, at that time, with the P—, though the gentleman did not think it proper to tell him the whole that had passed, and relate what you said of him in so ungrateful a manner*.”

The disclosure of this secret conversation, and of the contemptuous expressions which Walpole is said to have uttered against the king, when prince of Wales, instead of irritating him against the minister, only raised his resentment higher against Pulteney. Franklin, the printer of the pamphlet, was arrested; Pulteney's name was struck out of the list of privy counsellors, and he was put out of all commissions of the peace †, measures which tended to render the breach irreparable. Such was indeed the bitterness of party, and the animosity against the minister, that Pulteney does not hesitate to declare, that “the opposition had come to a determined resolution, not to listen to any treaty whatsoever, or from whomsoever it may come, in *which the first and principal condition should not be to deliver him up to the justice of the country* ‡”.

When such virulent invectives were cast on both sides, it was hardly possible to suppose that any compromise could be effected; and Pulteney continued invariably to oppose the measures of Walpole, and was principally instrumental in driving him from the helm of affairs. But although in the zeal of party, and in the warmth of debate, these two great men reviled each other with so much acrimony, yet even in the house of commons they frequently entered into conversation on the most amicable terms; and as Pulteney always, though in opposition, sat on the treasury bench, these opportunities were very frequent. Dr. Pearce, bishop of Rochester, recorded anecdotes of their easy manner of conversing, which reflects the highest honour on both parties.

* Answer to an infamous Libel, p. 55, 56.

† Mr. Pulteney's Answer, p. 47.

‡ Tindal, v. 20. p. 104.

“ Mr.

Struck out of
the list of
privy coun-
sellors.

Period V.

1730 to 1734.

"Mr. Pulteney sitting upon the same bench with Sir Robert Walpole in the house of commons, said, "Sir Robert, I have a favour to ask of you." O my good friend Pulteney, said Sir Robert, what favour can you have to ask of me? It is, said Mr. Pulteney, that Dr. Pearce may not suffer in his preferment for being my friend. I promise you, returned Sir Robert, that he shall not. Why then I hope, said Mr. Pulteney, that you will give him the deanery of Wells. No, replied Sir Robert, I cannot promise you that for him, for it is already promised."

Sir Robert having afterwards obtained for him the deanery of Winchester, his friend Mr. Pulteney, congratulating him on his promotion, said to him, "Dr. Pearce, though you may think that others besides Sir Robert have contributed to get you that dignity, yet you may depend upon it, that he is all in all, and that you owe it entirely to his good-will towards you; and therefore, as I am now so engaged in opposition to him, it may happen, that some who are of our party may, if there should be any opposition for members of parliament at Winchester, prevail upon me to act there in assistance of some friend of our's; and Sir Robert, at the same time, may ask your assistance in the election for a friend of his own, against one whom we recommend. I tell you, therefore, beforehand, that if you comply with my request, rather than Sir Robert's, to whom you are so much obliged, I shall have the worse opinion of you. Could any thing be more generous to the dean as a friend, or to Sir Robert, to whom in other respects he was a declared opponent *?"

CHAPTER THE FORTIETH:

1733.

Walpole proposes to take Half a Million from the Sinking Fund, for the Service of the current Year.—Encroachments from its first Establishment to this Motion.—Opposition to the Bill.—Substance of the Reasons on both Sides.—It passes the House.—Subsequent Encroachments.—Beneficial Consequences which would have been derived from appropriating the Produce to the Liquidation of the Debt.—Ill Consequences of alienating it.—Motives which induced the Minister to take that Method of raising Supplies.

THE last accounts which I had occasion to give of the parliamentary proceedings and domestic events, were carried down only to May 1730. The hopes of a division amongst the Whigs, and of the ministers, all gave

* Life of Pearce.

energy

energy to the leaders of opposition; but the ill success of their exertions, and the uninterrupted quiet and prosperity of the country, during the two succeeding years, render the domestic history barren of events, and afford little worthy of mention in the life of the minister. But the sixth session of the third septennial parliament, which opened on the 17th of January 1733, is distinguished by two measures of Sir Robert Walpole; of which the first, to take half a million from the sinking fund, though contrary to the national interest, was carried by a large majority; and the second, which was the excise scheme, though evidently calculated for the advantage of the country, met with such violent opposition, as induced the minister to relinquish it.

This chapter will be confined to the discussion of the important question concerning the alienation of the sinking fund; a measure which has incurred the bitter censure of most writers who have speculated on the subject of finance, and which seems to be the greatest blot in the administration of the minister. In this disquisition, I shall endeavour to state, the deviations from, and encroachments on the sinking fund, until it was finally perverted from its original use, and instead of being employed in the liquidation of the national debt, became a fund for the current service of the year; to shew the beneficial consequences which would have resulted from following the original design; and to consider the motives which induced the minister to counteract his own great establishment, and to entail a debt on the nation, which, if it could not have been entirely paid off, might at least have been considerably diminished:

When the house of commons passed an act for the establishment of a fund for applying the surplusses of duties and revenues to the liquidation of the national debt, called in subsequent acts the sinking fund, the words to appropriate them to that purpose were as strong as could be found, *to and for none other use, intent, or purpose whatsoever.*

Origin of the sinking fund.

During the whole reign of George the First, it was invariably appropriated to its original purposes, and rather than encroach upon it, money was borrowed upon new taxes, when the supplies in general might have been raised, by dedicating the surplusses of the old taxes to the current services of the year*. Even in the infancy of the establishment, when its operations were necessarily very confined, great advantages were derived even from this small surplus; the national interest was immediately reduced from 6 to 5 per cent.; £.750,000 in old exchequer bills were paid off in 1719; and it appeared, by the report of the house of commons, that from 1717 to 1728, it had discharged £. 2,698,416, and that its average amount was £. 1,200,000.

* Price's Appeal on the National Debt. Sinclair, p. 106.

It

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1730 to 1734.

Appropriated
to other uses.Debates on
its alienation.

It had no sooner attained this progressive power, than its operations were suspended. Between 1727 and 1733, several encroachments had been made, either by alienating the taxes which yielded the surplusses, or by charging the interest of several loans upon the surplusses appropriated to the payment of the debt. But although this measure was in effect the same as depriving it of gross sums (there being no difference between taking the annual interest of a sum, and that sum itself) yet as these encroachments were not literally direct invasions of the fund, they seem to have met with little opposition.

However, in 1733 an open attack was made. Half a million being voted for the service of the ensuing year, the minister proposed to take that sum from the sinking fund, and by that means to continue the land tax at one shilling in the pound; adding, that if this motion should be objected to, he should move for a land tax of two shillings in the pound, there being no other means of providing for the current expences.

This motion justly occasioned a long and violent debate, and the strength of the argument undoubtedly lay on the side of opposition. The whole substance of the reasons, which the minister could urge in defence of this violation of his own principles, was the necessity of giving ease to the landed interest, and the dread of the public creditors to have their debts discharged. On this occasion he advanced this remarkable position, that the situation of the country, and the case of the public creditors was altered so much since the establishment of the sinking fund, that the competition among them was not who should be the first, but who should be the last to be paid, an assertion, which none of the opposition ventured to contradict, and therefore may be considered as true. He also added, that although the sinking fund was established for the payment of the debts, yet it was still subject to the disposal of parliament; and whenever it appeared, that it could be more properly and beneficially applied to some other use, the legislature had a power, and ought to dispose of it in that manner.

On the other side, the opposition argued, that the sacred deposit for discharging the debts and abolishing the taxes, ought not to be applied to any use, except in cases of extreme necessity, which were not now apparent; that the assenting to the motion was in fact robbing posterity of £. 500,000, and the progressive interest of that sum, for a trifling ease to themselves. They reminded him of his inconsistency, in destroying his own darling project, and undermining the boasted monument of his own glory; and Sir John Barnard emphatically urged, "that the author of such an expedient must expect the curses of posterity."

These arguments, however, did not affect the decision of the house of commons. The influence of the minister, aided by the co-operation of the landed,

landed, monied, and popular interests, triumphed over opposition; and the motion was carried by a majority of 110 voices, 245 against 135.

The practice of alienating the sinking fund having been once sanctioned by parliament, was continued without intermission. In 1734 £.1,200,000, or the whole produce of the year, was taken from it; in 1735 and 1736, it was anticipated and mortgaged. "Thus expired," observes Dr. Price, perhaps with more enthusiasm than truth, "after an existence of a few years, the sinking fund; that sacred blessing (as it was once thought) and the nation's only hope. Could it have escaped, it would long before this time have eased Britain of all its debts, and left it safe and happy."

In regard to the beneficial consequences which must have resulted from the due administration of the sinking fund, many words are not wanting to prove that point. Without estimating the advantages as highly as the opponents of the minister, or Dr. Price, it may fairly be inferred, from the statement of Walpole himself, that had the produce been applied to that purpose, from its first establishment in 1716 to 1739, the year in which the war with Spain commenced, that more than 20 millions of the national debt might have been easily paid off, whereas only £.7,196,740 were discharged*.

The ill consequences to the public of alienating the sinking fund, are so notorious and evident, that it is not my intention to justify Sir Robert Walpole; on the contrary, he deserves, and has sufficiently incurred the censure of posterity, who have suffered by this measure. But while we blame this conduct in its full latitude, let us not follow the example of those speculative writers, who do not sufficiently weigh existing circumstances, neglect to consider the temper of the times and the situation of the country, and who judge of the measures pursued by government in 1733, from those which have been pursued in subsequent times. In justice to the memory of a minister, who seems to have sacrificed every object for the preservation of interior tranquillity and external peace, let us consider the motives which induced him to propose the alienation of the sinking fund, which cannot be better illustrated, than in the words of a very judicious writer on finance.

* The opposition computed, but on very erroneous calculations, that at Christmas 1733, £.25,000,000 might have been paid off more than had been discharged, and Dr. Price observes, "Had it, from the year 1732, been allowed to increase beyond this (except from the interest of debts paid by it,) and been applied for the first twenty-five years to the payment of debts, bearing 4 per cent. interest,

and afterwards to the payment of debts, bearing 3 per cent. it would (in the present year 1781) have completed the redemption of more than one hundred and sixty millions of debt, leaving the public, during this whole period, in possession of all the surplusses which have arisen in the revenue beyond £.1,212,000, except those produced by redemptions &c."

§. Price on Annuities, vol. 1. p. 220.

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Farther encroachments.

Speculations on the subject.

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1739 to 1734.

"These steps of administration I neither censure or approve of. I must suppose every statesman to have good reasons for doing what he does, unless I can discover that his motives are bad. May not the landed interest, who composed the parliament, have insisted upon such a diminution of their load? May not the proprietors of the public debts have insisted, on their side, that no money out of the sinking fund should be thrown into their hands, while the bank was making loans upon the land and malt duties at 3 per cent.? Might not the people have been averse to an augmentation of taxes? When three such considerable interests concur in a scheme, which in its ultimate though distant consequences, must end in the notable prejudice of perpetuating the debts, although opportunities offer to diminish them, what can government do? They must submit; and, which is worse, they cannot well avow their reasons.

"Such combinations must occur, and frequently too, in every state loaded with debts, where the body of the people, the landlords, and the creditors, find an advantage in the non-payment of the national debt. It is for this reason, I imagine, the best way to obviate the bad consequences of so strong an influence in parliament, would be, to appropriate the amount of all sinking funds in such a manner, as to put it out of a nation's power to misapply them, and by this means force them either to retrench their extraordinary expences, or to impose taxes for defraying them*."

Popularity of
the measure.

These observations are perfectly just, and consonant to the spirit and temper of the times; nor did any measure of Walpole's administration more conciliate the favour of the landholders, monied men, and people, than the alienation of the sinking fund, so justly deprecated by posterity, yet so much applauded by his contemporaries.

For a long period after the accession of George the First, the greater part of the landed interest had uniformly opposed government. With a view to ingratiate the new family with these persons, who formed a large party in the house of commons, the minister had lowered the land tax to three and then to two shillings in the pound, and this measure had given the administration great popularity. It had most effectually galled the opposition, and brought over many friends to government; and it was truly said by Henry Pelham, in the house of commons, "Gentlemen may talk as they please of what was done in last session of parliament; but I can say, that in all places where I have since been, I have had the pleasure of receiving the thanks of the people, for the ease then given to the landed interest; and whatever glofs may

* Stewart's Political Economy, vol. 2, page 391.



now be put upon that affair, yet I know that some gentlemen, who appeared against it, were heard to say at the time that affair was mentioned, it will please the country too much, and therefore we must endeavour to render it abortive. I will, indeed, do the gentlemen the justice to believe that they then spoke as they thought; and they then did what they could to prevent the success of a design, by which his majesty's administration has gained the favour and the esteem of the generality of the landholders in England *."

The monied men were no less satisfied. The minister himself informs us of their principles: "The sinking fund" he says, "was now grown to a great maturity, produced annually about £. 1,200,000, and became almost a terror to all the individual proprietors of the public debts. The high state of credit, the low rate of interest, and the advanced price of the stocks and funds *above par*, made the great monied companies, and all their proprietors, apprehend nothing more than being obliged to receive their principals too fast; and it became almost the universal consent of mankind, that a million a year was as much as the creditors of the public could bear to receive, in discharge of part of their principal †."

As to the people at large, it is always more agreeable to them to defray the current expences by alienating a sinking fund, than by imposing a new tax. Every tax is felt, soon occasions murmurs, and meets with some opposition. In proportion as the taxes are multiplied, two difficulties arise; the people more loudly complain of every new impost, and it becomes more difficult to find out fresh subjects of taxation, or to augment the old levies. But a temporary suspension of the payment of the debt is not felt, and occasions neither murmurs or complaint. To borrow therefore from the sinking fund is always an obvious expedient for raising supplies ‡, and has never been known to create a national ferment.

The minister must have been more than man, had he preferred the blessings of posterity to the curses of his own age, or sacrificed present ease to the dread of remote evils.

Yet, after making due allowance to the temper of the times, and the situation of parties, the measure itself cannot be justified; the warmest admirers of the minister must allow, that it is a dark speck in his financial administration.

* Chandler, vol. 7. p. 295.

† Some Considerations on the Publick Funds, p. 56.

‡ Smith, Wealth of Nations, vol. 3. p. 418.

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The sagacious mind of Walpole, might have discovered some method of satisfying the public creditors, while he paid them off; he might have conciliated present advantage with the benefit of posterity, combined his own interest with that of the people, and by confining himself to a partial alienation, have rendered it a temporary, and not a permanent evil *.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIRST:

1733.

Origin and Progress of the Excise.—Object of Walpole's Scheme.—Arts of Opposition.—Parliamentary Proceedings.—Speech of Walpole.—Bill abandoned.—Views and Conduct of Opposition.—Influence of Walpole.—Removals and Promotions.—Prorogation of Parliament.

I AM now arrived at that important period in the life of Sir Robert Walpole, which relates to what is usually called the EXCISE SCHEME, or in other words; the plan for subjecting the duties on wine and tobacco to the laws of excise; a measure which raised a great ferment in the nation, because it was perverted by the malignant spirit of party, and was not thoroughly understood by sober and impartial persons; but which reason, and the disinterested voice of posterity has sanctioned and justified.

Tucker's Eulogium of the excise scheme.

On this subject, a judicious writer †, who well understood the principles of commerce, has observed, " Without entering into a defence of all parts of

* For the history and alienation of the sinking fund have been consulted, An Enquiry into the Conduct of our Domestick Affairs from the Year 1721 to 1734: Supposed to be written by Mr. Pulteney, page 33 to 55. An answer to that pamphlet, intitled, Some Considerations concerning the Publick Funds, written by Sir Robert Walpole, page 8 to 81.

Price on Annuities, vol. 1. page 185 to 223. Sinclair on the Revenue, vol. 1. page 99 to 101. Smith's Wealth of Nations, vol. 3 p. 410. Stuart's Political Economy, vol. 2.

† Tucker's Elements of Commerce and Theory of Taxes, p. 148, a book printed but not published.

his conduct, I am persuaded that impartial posterity will do him the justice to acknowledge, that if ever a statesman deserved well of the British nation, Sir Robert Walpole was the man. Indeed, the only true way of discovering, whether we are advancing or retreating in our political and commercial capacity, is to compare the past with the present, and to examine whether we have the same quantity of pernicious taxes, and monopolizing patents, as we had formerly. If we have not, it is our business to be thankful for the deliverance we have received, and to unite our endeavours to be freed from the remainder. This is real patriotism and public spirit.

"One of the great merits of Sir Robert Walpole, and in which perhaps no minister ever approached him, was that of simplifying the taxes, abolishing the numerous petty complicated imposts which checked commerce and vexed the fair trader, and substituting in their stead more equal and simple.

"But to omit matters of lesser note, the wisest proposal to relieve the nation was the excise scheme, by means of which the whole island would have been one general FREE PORT, and a *magazine* and *common storehouse* for all nations.

"It was not indeed a perfect scheme at its first appearance; but the foundation was good, and a few alterations would have rendered it a most useful institution for the purposes of national commerce. But the business of those times was not to alter, mend, or improve, but to oppose, and to raise a ferment. But even in its most imperfect state it would have defeated the views of monopolists, and have proved of great national advantage. If the bill had been so worded as to be only *permissive* not *compulsory*, every man in this kingdom would have made the excise scheme his own choice, that is, he would have preferred the method of putting his goods in a warehouse, and paying the duties as he wanted them, rather than paying the duties all at once at the custom house. As a proof of this, let it be observed, that the very men who made the loudest clamour against the excise scheme, in a few years petitioned for a much worse, the present law relating to tobacco; which is allowed on all hands to be an excise scheme in effect, and to have inconveniences, which the excise scheme had not. But to give some salvo to the matter, the word *Permit* is changed to that of *Certificate* *."

Either the excise scheme was not such as it is here explained, or the opposition to it was founded on principles of error, misrepresentation, and party. Let me then be permitted to consider by what means the nation in general was induced to give such a decided resistance to the bill, and to make as

* Tucker, Theory of Laws, p. 149.

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Origin and
progress of
the excise.

public and as loud rejoicings when it was relinquished, as upon the most glorious national victory ever gained over our enemies in times of the greatest danger.

In attempting to develop these causes, it may be expedient to trace the history of the excise from its first introduction into England, until the opening of Walpole's scheme. The first attempt to impose it was made in 1626, by a commission under the great seal, issued to thirty-three lords and others of the privy council, but the parliament having remonstrated, it was judged by both houses contrary to law, and the commission was accordingly cancelled by the king *.

So odious was the very name, that if we may credit Howel, Sir Dudley Carleton, then secretary of state, having only named it in the house of commons, with a view to shew the happiness which the people of England enjoyed above other nations, in being exempted from that imposition, was suddenly interrupted, called to the bar, and nearly sent to the Tower †.

During the civil wars in 1641, parliament ventured to impose an excise on beer, ale, cyder, and perry; but although they pleaded absolute necessity in excuse for this expedient, and continued it only from month to month; yet the execution of it raised riots in London. The populace burnt down the excise house in Smithfield, and nothing but a standing army, adds the Craftsman, would have forced it upon the people at that time, when they were greatly disaffected to the king and favourable to the parliament ‡.

Although Charles the First, in one of his declarations, charged parliament with imposing insupportable taxes and odious excises upon their fellow subjects; yet he was afterwards under the necessity of recurring to the same expedient. Accordingly, excises were laid on by both parties, though both of them declared that they should be continued only till the end of the war, and then should be abolished.

Soon afterwards the parliament imposed it on sugar, butcher's meat, and on so many other commodities, that it might justly be called general, in pursuance of a plan, laid down by Pym, in a letter to Sir John Hotham; "That they had proceeded to the excise in many particulars, and intended to go farther; but that it would be necessary to use the people to it by little and little §."

At the restoration, the excise act was abolished on all articles of consumption, except beer and ale, cyder and perry, which produced a clear revenue, according to Davenant, of £.666,383. These duties were divided into two

* Craftsman, N^o 333.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid. 1773. Appendix. Blackstone, B. 1. C. 8. Clarendon.

equal

equal portions; the one called the hereditary excise, because granted to the crown for ever, in recompense for the court of wards, purveyance, and the levies abolished by act of parliament; the other the temporary excise, because granted only for the life of the king.

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On the accession of James the Second, the parliament not only renewed the temporary excise for his life, but also increased it by additional duties on wines, vinegar, tobacco, and sugar, which however were suffered to expire.

The immediate effects of the revolution were to diminish the excises, supposed to be of a nature peculiarly obnoxious to the spirit and principles of the constitution. But the necessity of raising money to defend the religion and liberties became so urgent, that even this species of imposition was adopted. Excise on salt, on the distillery, and on malt, since known by the name of the malt tax, were then first introduced; an additional excise on beer produced alone £.450,000, and the sums raised by those duties, during the reign of William, amounted to £.13,649,328, or nearly a million per annum.

But so great were the necessities which the war on the Spanish succession intailed on the nation, during the reign of queen Anne, that the aversion to the excise did not prevent additional duties from being laid on several articles of consumption, and it produced in her reign £.20,859,311, or nearly £.1,738,275 per annum.

During the whole reign of George the First, no excise was laid on, except a small duty on wrought plate, under the administration of Sunderland. But the internal tranquillity of the country, and the exemption from foreign war, increased so much the produce of the taxes, that the excise yielded, in 13 years, £.30,421,451, or about £.2,340,000 per annum. Its unpopularity however was not abated by long usage, and the laws for the collection were necessarily so severe, and had been so often exercised in preventing frauds and punishing smugglers, that they were considered by many persons as encroaching on private property and personal liberty.

Such were the prejudices conceived against the excise, that the principal writers on finance, government, and trade, from the revolution to the period under consideration, almost uniformly condemn it; and a plausible notion prevailed, that as the real income of every country originates from the land, all taxes should be at once imposed on landed property*.

Public aversion to the excise.

Even Davenant, who well understood the nature of taxes in general, and has so ably written on public credit, was deceived in this particular. Because

* For a refutation of this system, see Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Neckar on *Finances*, vol. 1. c. 6. *Steuart's Political Economy*. Sinclair, vol. 2. p. 213.

at

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at that time the excise had the effect of sinking the price of the subject excised instead of raising the price of the produce *, he concluded that all excises fall ultimately upon the land, and proposed, as more equitable, the poll tax and land tax.

The authority of Locke also contributed to spread the same notion, and his opinion against the establishment of the excise, was quoted with due effect by the Craftsman. That great philosopher, whose writings tended so much to expand and enlighten the human mind, had without due consideration asserted, that all impositions on articles of consumption fell ultimately upon land. The natural consequence therefore of that position was, that any additional duties on wine and tobacco could not ultimately ease the landholder, and therefore could not fulfil the intention held forth to the country gentlemen, as an argument in favour of the bill.

This system, though exploded † by a more intelligent age, had a surprising influence on all ranks and descriptions of men at that time, when the principles of commerce and taxation were little understood, and less followed. The opposition laid great stress on this argument; and in conformity to the existing opinion, Sir William Wyndham did not scruple to declare it, "as demonstrable as any proposition in Euclid, that if we actually paid a land tax of ten shillings in the pound, without paying any other excises or duties, our liberties would be much more secure, and every landed gentleman might live at least in as much plenty, and might make a better provision for his family, than under the present mode of taxation."

Walpole's
motives for
extending it.

On the contrary, the sagacity of Walpole led him to perceive, that a tax on landed property was a greater burthen to the subject than taxes on articles of consumption. He was fully aware, that the excise laws obstruct the operations of the smugglers more effectually than the laws of the customs; that the method of levying taxes in use, was more burthensome upon trade, and more expensive to the merchants, than the raising of them by excise, and that

* The excise upon malt had the effect of lowering the price of barley, instead of raising the value of beer. *Steuart's Political Economy*, vol. 2. p. 362.

† Sir John Sinclair has, in a few words, ably shewn the absurdity of imposing all the taxes on land. "Were it admitted, though it can hardly be seriously maintained in a commercial country, that the whole income of the nation arose from the cultivation of the soil, yet still, by imposing duties on consumptions, a greater revenue may be raised, than by a direct tax on land. By the latter method you only tax the proprietor of the soil, who has only a cer-

tain portion of the produce, and a considerable part of which is necessarily taken from him for the subsistence of others. Whereas by the former method, the public shares in the profits of those individuals who derive any benefit from the soil by any means, whether directly or indirectly. And hence, whilst the tax of four shillings in the pound on land is severely felt by many individuals in England, though it yields only two millions per annum, a tax on barley, in all its various stages of consumption, to the amount of above three millions and a half, is levied without murmur."

Sinclair on the Revenue, vol. 2. p. 173.

it would be more beneficial to commerce, and would considerably increase the revenue, if all, or the greater part of the customs were converted into excises. But as he well knew the aversion which the nation entertained against the excise, and as he was unwilling to deviate from his own great principle of government, *not to rouse things which are at rest*, he proposed gradually to introduce his plan by abolishing the land tax, and substituting other methods, until he could venture to come forwards with the proposal of his great scheme for extending the excise.

With this view he had made an alteration in the duties on coffee, tea, and chocolate, by abolishing the import duties, and subjecting them to inland duties, and to the same mode of collection as is practised in the excise. But as he still suffered them to be levied as customs, and prudently omitted to mention the word excise, this amendment met with no opposition, and it proved so beneficial, that it increased the duties on tea, coffee, and chocolate about 120,000 a year*.

For the same purpose he proposed the revival of the salt duty, which had been abolished in 1729, because he conceived, that a revival of excise duties on commodities formerly subjected to that mode of collection, would not be regarded with so jealous an eye, as a new impost in the same line.

Revives the
salt duty.

But though he thus endeavoured to conceal his intended purpose, yet the opposition penetrated his scheme; in the debate which took place on that subject, they first threw down the gauntlet, and dwelt with unabated energy on the apprehensions of a general excise, as the war whoop to spread an alarm throughout the country, and as the death warrant of national liberty. It was then that, provoked by the petulance of his adversaries, and entertaining too great a contempt of their arguments, with more spirit than judgment, and with more attention to the dictates of truth, than to the temper of the times, he anticipated the intended mention of his extensive views, and laid down the great plan before it was sufficiently matured, and before the nation was able to consider and appreciate its excellence. He

* The difference between the customs and excise is thus defined by Sir Robert Walpole himself. "The duties known by the name of customs are certain rates imposed by authority of parliament upon all commodities imported from abroad, which rates are either to be paid by the importer, upon the entry at importation, with different allowances and discounts for prompt payment, or they must be

secured by bond, payable in a certain number of months, and, as well as the duties paid down, are repaid and drawn back again upon re-exportation, as the bonds given, vacated and discharged; or in short, customs are duties paid by the merchant, upon *importation*: Excises, duties payable by the retail trader upon consumption." Orford Papers.

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unequivocally declared, that the land tax was the most unequal, most grievous, and the most oppressive tax that ever was known in this country; a tax that never ought to be raised but in times of the greatest necessity; and in answer to those who opposed the revival of the salt duties, because it was partly levied under the excise, he ventured to declare, that an excise is only a word for a tax raised in a different manner. He added, "If it be found by experience, that the present method of raising our taxes is more burthensome upon our trade, and more inconvenient and expensive than the excise, I see no manner of reason why we should be frightened by these two words, general excise, from changing the method of collecting the taxes we now pay, and choosing that which is most convenient for the trading part of the nation *."

This manly avowal of his sentiments in favour of the excise laws, was naturally deemed by opposition the prelude to his adoption of them, and was magnified into a scheme for a general excise on all the necessities of life.

Aware of having prematurely advanced notions which the age could not comprehend, a pamphlet was published on this subject, under his auspices, intitled, "*Some general Considerations concerning the Alteration and Improvement of the Revenues*;" in which an attempt was made to explain to the people, that the scheme in agitation was founded on the first principles of commerce and taxation, and in no degree derogatory from the liberties of the subject.

Efforts of
opposition.

But in this progressive plan he was baffled by opposition, who employed against him all the powers of wit and eloquence, which they possessed in so abundant a degree; and it must be confessed the scheme was not defended with equal energy and spirit. The nation took the alarm; and before the scheme was understood, even before it was formally proposed, the writers in opposition, more particularly the Craftsman, delineated such a hideous picture of the EXCISE, as raised among the people the most terrible apprehensions. These weekly essays, collected and published under the title of "*Arguments against Excises*," contributed to pervert the judgment, and excite the rage of the deluded multitude. Against the united shafts of sophistry, wit, and ridicule, adapted to the prejudices and conceptions of the people, the weapons of sober truth and reason had no effect.

Object of the
scheme.

The grand object of the bill was to give ease to the landed interest, by the total abolition of the land tax; to prevent frauds; to decrease smuggling;

* Chandler.

gling;

gling; to augment the revenue; to simplify the taxes, and facilitate the collection of them at the least possible expence.

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1733.

The great outlines of the plan were, to convert the customs into duties of excise, and to meliorate the laws of the excise in such a manner, as to obviate their abuses or oppressions.

Such were the object and general outlines of the plan. The specific propositions were, to divide the commodities into taxed and not taxed, and to confine the taxed commodities to a few articles of general consumption. To comprehend among the untaxed commodities, the principal necessaries of life, and all the raw materials of manufacture. The free importation of the necessaries of life would, by rendering those necessaries cheaper, reduce the price of labour. The reduction of the price of labour would diminish the price of home manufactures, and increase thereby the demand in all foreign markets, by underselling those of other nations. The free importation of raw materials would reduce the price of manufactures, and the cheapness of the goods would secure both the home consumption, and a great command in the foreign markets; and it was this regulation which induced Tucker to say, that by means of this scheme the whole island would become *one general FREE PORT*.

So much for the commodities untaxed. But even the trade of the taxed commodities would be augmented, and both the foreign and home trade would enjoy considerable advantages. The foreign trade would be benefited, because the commodities delivered out of the warehouse for exportation, being exempted from all imposts, would be perfectly free; and the carrying trade, under these regulations, would be highly increased. The home trade would be benefited, because the importer, not being obliged to advance the duty on the commodities delivered out for interior consumption, until he disposed of his goods, would afford to sell them cheaper, than if he had been obliged to advance the duty at the moment of importation.

Such, according to the opinion of a very judicious writer*, was the object of the famous excise scheme.

Preparatory to its introduction, a committee had been appointed to inspect into the frauds and abuses committed in the customs; and on the 7th of June, 1732, Sir John Cope, the chairman, had presented their report to the house. Though it was of infinite importance, and of so great length as to take up, when printed, 103 pages in folio, yet the committee were so sensible that they had not

Preparatory proceedings.

* Smith's Wealth of Nations, vol. 3. p. 358.

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Report of the
committee.

fully explored all the recesses of fraud, and had left great part of their task unaccomplished, that they accompanied this elaborate document with an apology for its imperfections, in which they observed, that the shortness of the session would not allow them to make it so complete as they might otherwise have done, and that the number and intricacy of the various frauds, rendered a thorough disquisition almost impracticable.

In this report they adverted to the frauds committed by traders in tobacco, tea, brandy, and wine, and in the course of it displayed scenes of dishonesty, perjury, informing, violence, and murder, which would appear to sanction almost any measure, however violent, by which so horrible a stigma could be removed from the mercantile body, and from the fiscal laws of the country. It appeared, from undeniable evidence, that by perjury, forgery, and the most impudent collusion, in the article of tobacco, the revenue was frequently defrauded to the amount of one third of the duties, and that in many cases, an allowance had been dishonestly obtained, as a drawback on re-exportation, exceeding the sum originally received by government, which in the port of London only, sustained by these means a loss of £. 100,000 per annum. The smuggling of tea and brandy was conducted so openly and so audaciously, that since Christmas 1723, a period only of nine years, the number of custom house officers beaten and abused amounted to 250; and six had been murdered. 251,320 pounds weight of tea, and 652,924 gallons of brandy had been seized and condemned; and upwards of 2,000 persons prosecuted. 229 boats and other vessels had been condemned, 185 of which had been burnt, and the remainder retained for the service of the crown. The smuggling of wine was managed with so much art, or the connivance of the revenue officers so effectually secured, that within the period of nine years, only 2,208 hogsheads had been condemned, though it appeared, from depositions on oath, that in the space of two years, 4,738 hogsheads had been run in Hampshire, Dorsetshire, and Devonshire only, and on inquiry, 30 officers were dismissed, and informations entered against 400 persons; 38 were committed to jail, 118 admitted evidence, and 45 had compounded.

Activity of
opposition.

Notwithstanding the facts contained in this report, and the endeavours used to enlighten the public mind, the opposition had been so assiduous and so successful in the dissemination of slander and suspicion, that they looked forward with impatience to the introduction of the minister's plan, as the certain means of triumph to them, and of disgrace to him: Indeed, considering the nature of the contest, they could hardly be thought too sanguine in their expectations of the event. The members of any administration proposing measures

measures for giving additional strength to government, for restraining the turbulent, or suppressing fraud, are open to every species of calumny, assailable by all the weapons of eloquence, wit, ridicule, personality, and misrepresentation; while in their defence, they are restricted to the use of those topics which make their impression only by force of time and experience. The majesty of argumentative eloquence, and the glare of wit, are undervalued, when eloquence is supposed to be biassed by interest, and wit is divested of personality and caustic satire, which alone can make it pleasing to the multitude.

The writers in the interest of opposition had sounded the trumpet of alarm from one end of the kingdom to the other: they asserted that the minister's plan would not tend to prevent fraud, decrease smuggling, or augment the revenue; but would destroy the very being of parliament, undermine the constitution, render the king absolute, and subject the houses, goods, and dealings of the subject, to a state inquisition. They represented the excise as a monster feeding on its own vitals; and compared it to the Trojan horse, which contained an army in its belly.

Having by these means agitated the public mind to a frenzy of opposition, the enemies of the minister were anxious to follow their advantage, and to urge him to bring forward his plan, before the people had leisure for sober reflection. London, and many places in the country, had given express instructions to their representatives, to oppose the excise scheme in all its forms, and to use every method to impede its progress; and the members were so anxious to shew that they had not been unmindful of these dictates, that they seized every opportunity, long before the measure was officially announced to the house, of casting reflections on it, and endeavouring to add to the impressions of horror already entertained against it.

On the opening of the session, the king, in his speech from the throne, recommended to the house, *that in all their deliberations, as well upon raising the annual supplies, as the distribution of the public revenues, they should pursue such measures as would most conduce to the present and future ease of their constituents.* In another part of his speech, he admonished them *to avoid unreasonable heats and animosities, and not suffer themselves to be diverted by any specious pretences, from steadfastly pursuing the true interest of the country.*

On the motion for the address, Sir John Barnard made these observations. "The honourable gentleman who moved the address, proposes for us to say, *That we will raise the supplies in such manner as will most conduce to the present and future ease of the subject.* Now, there seems to be a great jealousy without

"doors,

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in parliament.

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“ doors, as if something were intended to be done in this session of parliament, that may be destructive to our liberties, and detrimental to our trade : from whence this jealousy hath arisen, I do not know ; but it is certain that there is such a jealousy among all sorts of people, and in all corners of the nation ; and therefore, we ought to take the first opportunity to quiet the minds of the people, and to assure them that they may depend upon the honour and integrity of the members of this house ; and that we will never consent to any thing that may have the least appearance of being destructive to their liberties, or detrimental to their trade ; for which reason, I move that these words, *and such as shall be consistent with the trade, interest, and liberty of the nation*, may be added as an amendment.”

In support of this amendment, Shippen observed, “ It is certain that there are great fears, jealousies, and suspicions without doors, that something is to be attempted in this session of parliament, which is generally thought to be destructive to the liberties and to the trade of this nation. There is at present a most remarkable and general spirit among the people for protecting and defending their liberties and their trade, in opposition to those attempts which they expect are to be made against both : from all quarters we hear of meetings and resolutions for that purpose ; and this spirit is so general, that it cannot be ascribed to any one set of men : they cannot be branded with the name of Jacobites or republicans ; no ; the whole people of England seem to be united in this spirit of jealousy and opposition.”

Walpole, in reply, disclaimed any knowledge of a design to injure the trade of the nation, and said, “ If the people are hampered or injured in their trade, they must feel it, and they will feel it before they begin to complain ; in such case it is the duty of this house, not only to hear their complaints, but, if possible, to find out a remedy. But the people may be taught to complain ; they may be made to feel imaginary ills, and by such practices they are often induced to make complaints before they feel any uneasiness.” He did not, however, oppose the amendment, and it was carried.

This was only a prelude to several other skirmishes which took place before the grand attack. In the debate of the 14th of February, on the subject of preventing the importation of foreign sugar, rum, &c. into the plantations in America, Sir John Barnard again observed, that “ It would be impossible to prevent the running of French rum on shore, even if we were to send to America the whole army of excise officers which we have
“ here

" here at home. The sending them thither, might, indeed, add a good deal to our happiness in this country; but all of them together could be of no service for such a purpose in that country."

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In the debate on alienating part of the sinking fund, a more decided attack was made by Pulteney, who said, " Though I was aware of the motion now made, I was in hopes that was not all the honourable gentleman was this day to open to the committee: There is another thing, a very terrible affair impending! A monstrous project! Yea, more monstrous than has ever yet been represented! It is such a project as has struck terror into the minds of most gentlemen within this house, and into the minds of all men without doors, who have any regard to the happiness or to the constitution of their country. I mean, that monster, the excise! That plan of arbitrary power, which is expected to be laid before this house in the present session of parliament."

23d February.

On the 27th of February, a call of the house being moved for on that day fortnight, the excise scheme was again introduced. Sir John Rushout commenced an attack on the minister, by saying, " I do not rise to oppose the call of the house; but there being, as I imagine, a certain scheme or project to be brought into the house, which seems to be of very great consequence to the whole nation, I wish that the call of the house may be about the time that that scheme is to be laid before us. We have long been in expectation of seeing this glorious scheme, which is to render us all completely happy; we have waited for it with impatience ever since the beginning of the present session. I do not know whether the scheme itself has lately met with any alterations or amendments; but I hope, if it be to be laid before us this session; it will not be put off till towards the end of the session, when gentlemen are tired out with attendance, and obliged to return home to mind their own private affairs."

Walpole replied, " As to the scheme mentioned by the honourable gentleman who spoke last, it is certain that I have a scheme, which I intend very soon to lay before you; I have not indeed, as yet, fully determined what my motion shall be; but if the motion for the call of the house be appointed for this day fortnight, I believe I shall be fully determined between this and that time. I do not desire, I never did desire to surprise this house in any thing; nor had I, thank God, ever any occasion to use the low art of taking advantage of the end of the session for any thing I had to propose; but when the house does resolve itself into a committee, which I mean to move for, I will lay before that committee a scheme which I have long thought of, which I am convinced is for the good of

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Sir William Wyndham followed, and affected to assume, as an abstract statement, that the question was, “ Whether we should sacrifice the constitution to the prevention of frauds in the revenue ?” Sir John Barnard seized this opportunity of making a popular speech, in which he said, “ If I have been rightly informed, this scheme, in its first conception, was for a *general excise*, but that, it seems, was afterwards thought too much at once, and therefore, we are now to single out only one or two branches, in order that they may first be hunted down. But the very same reason may prevail with us, to subject every branch to those arbitrary laws ; and as such laws are, in my opinion, absolutely inconsistent with liberty, therefore I must think that the question upon this scheme, even altered as it seems it is, will be, Whether we shall endeavour to prevent frauds in the collection of the public revenues, at the expence of the liberties of the people ?” “ For my own part,” added he, “ I never was guilty of any fraud, and therefore I speak against my own interest, when I speak against any method that may tend towards preventing frauds ; but I will never put my private interest in balance with the interest or happiness of the nation. *I had rather beg my bread from door to door, and see my country flourish, than be the greatest subject in the nation, and see the trade of my country decaying, and the people enslaved and oppressed.*”

In the interval between the debate and the call of the house, the minister was

was preparing to bring forward his scheme in a manner as little exceptionable as possible, and the opposition were exerting all their powers and influence to form a strong party against it, and to excite the public to clamour for its rejection, whatever might be its merits.

On the 7th of March, the minister moved, that on that day se'nnight, the house should resolve itself into a committee, to consider of the most proper methods for the better security and improvement of the duties and revenues already charged upon and payable from tobacco and wines; which was ordered. It was farther ordered, that the proper accounts, returns, and other papers, should be referred to the said committee, and that the commissioners of the customs and excise should attend.

Motion for a committee.

On this occasion, all the arts and influence of opposition were called forth to excite clamours against the measure. Not only the members solicited the attendance of their friends, but letters were delivered by the beadles, and other officers in the parishes and wards of the city, to induce a numerous party to assemble at the doors, and in the avenues to the house, to overawe the proceedings of the legislature. Walpole was apprized of these proceedings, but not to be deterred from the prosecution of his design. On the 15th of March, the house having resolved itself into a committee, he opened the business, and said;

"As * I had the honour to move that the house should resolve itself into this committee, I think it incumbent on me to open to you, what was then intended to be proposed as the subject of your consideration. This committee is appointed for the better security of the duties and revenues already charged and payable upon tobacco. This can be done in no way so proper and effectual, as by preventing the commission of those frauds by which the revenue has already sustained such great injuries. As the proposed improvement is to be made by an alteration in the method of collecting and managing the duties already imposed, without any addition, or subjecting to the same duties any articles not already chargeable, I might have avoided stating this project to a committee of the whole house; but I have deserted the old road, and proposed a supply not immediately necessary for the current service of the year, that I might leave a greater freedom of consideration, by taking away every appearance of pressing necessity. I shall therefore only observe, that some previous provision must be made for the future application of the

Walpole's speech.

* The substance of this speech is principally taken from heads and memorandums, in the hand writing of Sir Robert Walpole, among the Orford Papers. A few connecting sen-

tences have been supplied from the printed speech in the contemporary publications: Political State; Historical Register. See also Chandler.

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increased sum which, should the plan I am about to propose be adopted, will be received into the exchequer.

"The contest, in the present instance, is between the unfair trader, on one side; the fair trader, the planter, and the public, on the other; but to the public must be referred my most forcible appeal, as they, in truth, bear the whole weight of the injury; for though the fraudulent factor seems to make the planter, retailer, and consumer equally his prey, yet the landed interest ultimately suffers the whole effect of the fraud, by making good what the subject pays, and the government does not receive.

"In such a cause, I might reasonably expect the approbation of the fair trader, and the assistance of parliament; for assuredly, if in these times any cause can possibly be considered exempt from the operations of party, it is the cause now before the committee. But, Sir, I am not to learn, that whoever attempts to remedy frauds, attempts a thing very disagreeable to all those who have been guilty of them, or who expect to derive future benefits from them. I know that these men, who are considerable in their numbers, and clamorous in their exertions, have found abettors in another quarter, in persons much worse than themselves; in men who are fond of improving every opportunity of stirring up the people to mutiny and sedition. But as the scheme I have to propose, will not only be a great improvement to the revenue, an improvement of two or three hundred thousand pounds by the year, but also a great benefit to the fair trader, I shall not be deterred, either by calumny or clamour, from doing my duty as a member of this house, and bringing forward a measure, which my own conscience justifies me in saying, will be attended with the most important advantages to the revenues and commerce of my country.

*Iustum et tenacem propositi virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Mente quatit solida.*

"Amongst the many slanders to which the report of this project has exposed me, I cannot avoid mentioning one, which has been circulated with an assiduity proportioned to its want of truth, that I was about to propose a general excise. In all plans for the benefit of government, two essential points must be considered, justice and practicability: many things are just which would not be practicable; but such a scheme would be neither one or the other. Various are the faults of ministers, various their fates: few have had the crimes of all; none till now found, that the imputation

of crime to him, became a merit in others. Yet if I were to propose to you such a scheme, popular opinion would run exactly in that channel. It would be a crime in me to propose, a crime in you to accept; and the only chance left to the house of retaining the favour of the people, would be the unqualified rejection of the project. *But I do most unequivocally assert, that no such scheme ever entered my head, or, for what I know, into the head of any man I am acquainted with.* Yet though I do not wish to do wrong, I shall always retain a proper share of courage and self-confidence to do what I judge right, and in the measures I am about to propose, shall rest my claim to support and approbation on the candid, the judicious, and the truly patriotic.

“My thoughts have been confined solely to the revenue arising from the duties on wine and tobacco; and it was the frequent advices I had of the shameful frauds committed in these two branches, and the complaints of the merchants themselves, that induced me to turn my attention to discover a remedy for this growing evil. I am persuaded, that what I am about to propose, will, if granted, be an effectual remedy. But, if gentlemen will be prevailed on by industry, artifice, and clamour, to indulge the suggestions of party prejudice, they and their posterity must pay dear for it, by the grievous entail of a heavy land tax, which they will have sanctioned by their pusillanimity, in not daring to brave the outrages of the fraudulent and self-interested. For myself, I shall only say, I have so little partiality for this scheme, except what a real and constitutional love of the public inspires, that if I fail in this proposal, it will be the last attempt of the kind I shall ever make, and I believe, a minister will not soon be found hardy enough to brave, on the behalf of the people, and without the slightest motive of interest, the worst effects of popular delusion and popular injustice.

“I shall, for the present, confine myself entirely to the tobacco trade, and to the frauds practised in that branch of the revenue. If there is one subject of taxation more obvious than another, more immediately within the direct aim of fiscal imposition than another, it is such an article of luxury as depends for its use on custom or caprice, and is by no means essential to the support or real comfort of human life. If there is a subject of taxation where it is more immediately the province of the legislature to suppress fraud, and strictly to insist on the payment of every impost, it must be that where the wrong is felt by every class of persons, and none are benefited, except the most dishonest and profligate part of the community. Both these descriptions apply to the subject before us. For though the use of tobacco is perhaps less sanctioned by natural reason than any other luxury, yet so great is the predilection for it, in its various forms, that from the

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palace to the hovel there is no exemption from the duty; and surely it must be considered an intolerable grievance, that by the frauds which are daily committed, the very poorest of the peasantry are obliged to pay this duty twice; once in the enhanced price of the article, for though the fraudulent trader contrives to save to himself the amount of the tax imposed by parliament, yet he does not sell it cheaper to the public; and a second time, in the tax that is necessarily substituted to make good the deficiency which has been by these means occasioned. Did it ever happen till now, that when an abuse of this kind was to be remedied, endeavours were used to make the attempt unpopular?

"In discussing this subject, it will be necessary first to advert to the condition of our planters of tobacco in America. If they are to be believed, they are reduced to the utmost extremity, even almost to a state of despair, by the many frauds that have been committed in that trade, and by the ill usage they have sustained from their factors and correspondents in England, who from being their servants, are become their tyrants. These unfortunate people have sent home many representations of the bad state of their affairs; they have lately deputed a gentleman with a remonstrance, setting forth their grievances, and praying for some speedy relief: this they may obtain by means of the scheme I intend now to propose; but I believe it is from that alone they can expect any relief.

"The next thing to be considered is, the state of the tobacco trade with respect to the fair trader. The man who deals honourably with the public, as well as individuals, the man who honestly pays all his duties, finds himself forestalled in almost every market within the island, by the smuggler and fraudulent dealer. As to our foreign trade in tobacco, those who have no regard to honour, to religion, or to the welfare of the country, but are every day contriving ways and means for cheating the public by perjuries and false entries, are the greatest gainers; and it will always be so, unless we can contrive some method of putting it out of their power to carry on such frauds for the future.

"We ought to consider the great loss sustained by the public, by means of the frauds committed in the tobacco trade, and the addition that must certainly be made to the revenue, if those frauds can be prevented in future. By this addition, parliament will acquire the means of exercising one of its most enviable privileges, that of diminishing the burthens of the country, the power of doing which will thus be presented to them in various forms. If it should be the prevailing opinion, that the discharge of the national debt should be accelerated, this increase offers an abundant resource. If the
idea

idea should prevail, that those taxes ought to be alleviated which fall heaviest on our manufacturers and the labouring poor, as soap and candles, this increase will replace the difference. Or if it should be judged that more immediate attention ought to be paid to the current service, the fund may be reserved for that use: and it is manifestly unjust and impolitic, that the national debt should be continued, and the payment postponed; or that the heavy duties on our manufactures should remain, which are justly paid, and without fraud; or that ways and means for the current service should be annually imposed, if the present revenues will answer all or any of these purposes. This, I am convinced, will be the effect of the scheme I am to propose, and whoever views it in its proper light, must see the planters, the fair traders, and the public ranged on one side in support of it; and none but the unfair traders and tobacco factors on the other.

"I am aware that the evidence to be adduced in proof of the existence of the frauds I am about to enumerate, is not such as would be sufficient to induce a court of justice to pronounce the guilt of those to whom they may be imputed. But as I do not undertake the task of inculcation, if I make out such a case to the committee, as will enable them to decide on the existence of the crime, they will not hesitate to apply the remedy. They will consider the deficiency of strict legal proof, as a motive for their interference, rather than their forbearance; more particularly when they reflect, that if persons are with difficulty induced to give testimony in such a case as this, where the good of the country only is to be pursued without injury to any one, they will be still less easily brought forward to give such information as will tend to the ruin of others. In this case it is hardly too much to say, that gentlemen should learn from the example of those interested, how to conduct themselves: they have, with an alacrity and unblushing eagerness which proves, which confesses their guilt, hastily inferred the most violent intentions in the friends of government; they have assumed facts, and inferred intentions without the smallest data, on which to found their presumptions. I ask no more than this; if I succeed in making it appear that gross frauds are daily practised, and the revenue injured in a most daring and profligate manner, that the proposed remedy, should it appear adequate and applicable, may be resorted to, without subjecting me to the necessity of procuring that which is, in fact, unattainable, such precise proof as would satisfy the administrators of the laws in the disposal of property, or deciding on guilt. Such evidence, and such facts as I have been able to collect, it is my duty to lay before you; and it is your duty to support me, unless my plan appears totally void of reason and justice."

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The minister then proceeded to give such preliminary statements and calculations, as were necessary to render his plans intelligible, to make the abuses obvious, and to demonstrate the propriety and necessity of reform. From these statements it appeared, that the existing duties on tobacco amounted to sixpence and one-third of a penny on every pound. The discounts, allowances, and drawbacks, were a total drawback on re-exportation; ten per cent. on prompt payment; and fifteen per cent. on bonded duties. The gross produce of the tax, at a medium, £. 754,131. 4s. 7d. the nett produce only £. 161,000.

Having made these statements, with the utmost exactness and perspicuity, he proceeded :

“ I shall now point out as clearly as I can, and as amply as my knowledge will enable me, the principal frauds and most glaring instances of dishonesty, which occasion this amazing disproportion. And first I shall mention one, which seems alone capable of diverting from its proper channel the amount of any tax. I mean that of using light weights inwards, and heavy weights outwards, of paying by the first, and taking the drawback by the last, and charging the planter, and taking commission by the whole. This evil is farther enhanced by negligence; for it is customary to weigh a few hogheads only, and if they answer, the whole pass according to the numbers in the cocket.

“ A particular instance of this fraud came lately to our knowledge by mere accident : one Mitford, who had been a considerable tobacco merchant in the city, happened to fail, at a time when he owed a large sum of money on bond to the crown. An extent was immediately issued against him, and government obtained possession of all his books, by which the fraud was discovered. For it appeared, as may be seen by one of his books, which I have in my hand, that upon the column where the false quantities which had been entered at the importation were marked, he had, by a collusion with the officer, got a slip of paper so artfully pasted down, that it could not be discovered, and upon this slip of paper were written the real quantities which were entered, because he was obliged to produce the same book when that tobacco was entered for exportation. But upon exportation, the tobacco was entered and weighed according to the quantities marked on this slip of paper, by which he secured a drawback, or his bonds returned, to near double the value of what he had actually paid duty for upon importation. Yet this Mitford was as honest a man, and as fair a trader, as any in the city of London. I desire not to be misunderstood; I mean, that before he failed, before these frauds came to be discovered, he was always reckoned as honest a man, and

as fair a trader, as any in the city of London, or in any other part of the nation."

After enumerating several other instances where government had been defrauded of a full third of the duties imposed, and legally payable, he came to Peele's case, which is singular from its enormity. "In September 1732, this Peele entered in the *James and Mary*, from Maryland, 310 hogsheds of tobacco, for which he paid the duty in ready money. In October following, he sold 200 hogsheds to one Mr. Hyam, for exportation, and they were immediately exported. It appears on these 200 hogsheds, that the duties paid at importation, according to the weights in the land-waiters books, were short of the real weights by 13,292 pounds. The certificates sworn to for Mr. Peele to obtain debentures, were to discharge bonds given on a former entry of Virginia tobacco, imported in November 1731. The indorsement on the cocket made by Mr. Peele, in order to receive the debentures, exceeded the real weights actually shipped by 8,288 pounds, so that the total of the pounds weight gained by this fraud, amounts to 21,580.

"The next fraud to which I shall direct your attention, is that of receiving the drawback on tobacco for exportation, and relanding it. The effects of this practice are too obvious to require elucidation; and it has been carried to such an extent, that a great number of ships were employed at Guernsey, Jersey, and the Isle of Man, in receiving and relanding such tobacco. Nor was the evil confined to these ports; a very intelligent gentleman, Mr. Howel, who resided many years in Flanders, has frequently observed several quantities of tobacco imported into Ostend and Dunkirk, and there repacked in bales of one hundred pounds each, and put on board vessels which waited there to reland it in England or Ireland. About twelve months ago, nine British vessels were employed in taking cargoes for this purpose at Dunkirk.

"The third fraud to which I shall direct the attention of the committee, is that of receiving the whole drawback for a commodity of almost no value, namely, the stalks of the tobacco, which it is usual, after the leaf has been stripped off, to press flat and cut, and by mixing this offal with sand and dust, impose on the revenue officers, and obtain the same drawback as for an equal weight of the entire plant. This miserable stuff, when the fraudulent purpose has once been answered, is either thrown into the sea, or relanded and sold at three farthings a pound, with an allowance of 1,010 pounds weight in five hogsheds.

"The fourth fraud I shall advert to, is one of very great consequence, known by the name of *socking*, which is a cant term for pilfering and stealing tobacco from ships in the river. This iniquitous practice, which was discovered

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discovered in 1728 and 1729, was chiefly carried on by watermen, lightermen, tide-waiters, and city porters, called gangs-men: the commodity so pilfered was deposited in houses from London Bridge to Woolwich, and afterwards sold, frequently to eminent merchants. Five hundred examinations have been taken on the subject, from which it appears, that, in the space of one year, fifty tons were socked on board ships and on the quays. Sixteen tons were seized, but that quantity was reckoned an inconsiderable part of the whole. In consequence of these informations, 150 officers were dismissed, nine were convicted, of whom six are ordered for transportation, three to be whipt: these prosecutions were all carried on at the expence of government; and it is not a little remarkable, when we recollect the professions of patriotism, virtue, and disinterestedness, which are now so copiously poured forth, that not a single merchant, though the facts were so notorious and shameful, assisted the state either by information or pecuniary exertion to suppress the fraud, or bring the delinquents to punishment.

"The last grievance I shall mention, cannot so properly be denominated a fraud, as an abuse arising from the nature of the duties paid, and the manner of paying them; I mean the advantage afforded to the merchant of trading with the public money, or making government pay more than they receive. Bonds are given for eighteen months, three years are allowed for the exportation of the article, and new importations discharge old bonds. The losses which result to government from the failure of the obligors in these bonds, is immense; besides the ungracious task to which it subjects them, of suing the sureties who had no interest in the contract. The rich trader has another advantage; he avoids giving bonds, by paying the amount of his duties in ready money, for which he is allowed a discount of ten per cent. Now it is very common, and not out of the line of fair trade, for a merchant to pay this duty, receive the discount, and by immediately entering the same commodity for exportation, gain an advantage (I will not say defraud the revenue) of ten per cent. without loss, risque, or expediture.

"The frauds which I have here enumerated are, I apprehend, sufficiently proved to satisfy the committee of their existence, and their enormity is obvious enough to demand active interference. The only remedy I can devise, is that of altering the manner of collecting the duties. Frauds become practicable by having but one check at importation, and one at exportation: if there is but one sentinel at a garrison, and he sleeps, or is corrupted, the castle is taken; but if there are more than one, it is in vain to corrupt the first, without extending the same influence to those who remain; and when difficulties

difficulties are so multiplied, the project becomes hazardous and uncertain, and is abandoned. Chapter 41.

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“ If the grievance then is admitted, it only remains to mention the remedy, and to consider whether it is effectual, or whether it is worse than the disease.

“ The laws of the customs are manifestly insufficient to prevent the frauds which already exist; I therefore propose to add the laws of excise; and by means of both, it is probable, I may say certain, that all such frauds will be prevented in future.

“ I have already stated to the committee, that the several imposts on tobacco amount to six pence and one third of a penny per pound, all of which must be paid down in ready money upon importation, with the allowance of ten per cent. upon prompt payment; or there must be bonds given, with sufficient sureties, for payment, which is often a great loss to the public, and always a great inconvenience to the merchant importer. Whereas, by what I shall propose, the whole duty will amount to no more than four pence three farthings per pound, and will not be paid till the tobacco is sold for home consumption; so that if the merchant exports his tobacco, he will be quite free from all payment of duty, or giving security; he will have nothing to do but re-load his tobacco for exportation, without being at the trouble of attending to have his bonds cancelled, or taking out debentures for the drawbacks: all which, I conceive, must be a great ease to the fair trader; and to every such trader the prevention of frauds must be a great advantage, because it will put all the tobacco traders in Britain on the same footing, which is but just and equitable, and what ought, if possible, to be accomplished.

“ Now, in order to make this ease effectual to the fair trader, and to contribute to his advantage, by preventing, as much as possible, all frauds for the future, I propose; as I have said, to join the laws of excise to those of the customs, and to leave the one penny, or rather three farthings per pound, called the farther subsidy, to be still charged at the custom house, upon the importation of tobacco, which three farthings shall be payable to his majesty's civil list as heretofore; and I propose for the future, that all tobacco, after being weighed at the custom-house, and charged with the said three farthings per pound, shall be lodged in a warehouse or warehouses, to be appointed by the commissioners of excise for that purpose, of which warehouse the merchant importer shall have one lock and key, and the warehouse-keeper to be appointed by the said commissioners shall have another, that the tobacco may lie safe in that warehouse, till the merchant finds a market for it, either for exportation or home consumption: if his market be for ex-

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portation, he may apply to his warehouse-keeper, and take out as much for that purpose as he has occasion for, which, when weighed at the custom-house, shall be discharged of the three farthings per pound with which it was charged upon importation, so that the merchant may then export it without any farther trouble. But if his market be for home consumption, he shall pay the three farthings charged upon it at the custom-house upon importation, and then, upon calling his warehouse-keeper, he may deliver it to the buyer, on paying an inland duty of four pence per pound, to the proper officer appointed to receive the same.

“ And whereas all penalties and forfeitures to become due by the laws now in being, for regulating the collection of the duties on tobacco, or at least all that part of them which is not given to informers, now belong to the crown, I now propose that all such penalties and forfeitures, in so far as they formerly belonged to the crown, shall for the future belong to the public, and be applicable to the same uses to which the said duties shall be made applicable by parliament; and for that purpose I have the king's commands to acquaint the house that he, out of his great regard for the public good, with pleasure consents that they shall be so applied; which is a condescension in his majesty, that I hope every gentleman in this house is fully sensible of, and will freely acknowledge.

“ Having thus explained my scheme to the committee, I shall briefly touch on the advantages to be derived from, and anticipate some of the objections which may probably be made to it.

“ First then, turning duties upon importation into duties on consumption, is manifestly a great benefit to the merchant importer. The paying down of duties, or bonding, are heavy burthens. The payment of duties requires a treble stock to what would else be requisite in trade; and the asking securities, besides numerous other inconveniences, subjects the merchant to the necessity of returning the favour. It hardly requires to be mentioned, that it is a very great accommodation to be obliged to provide for the payment of one penny only, instead of six pence and one third of a penny.

“ The next benefit is the great abatement on the whole duty. The inland duty being four pence per pound, and the remaining subsidy three farthings, gives an abatement of 10 per cent. and of 15 per cent. upon the whole: whereas, the 25 per cent. is at present given only on the money paid down, which is not a fifth of the whole, and but 15 per cent. allowed on the four fifths which is bonded. Thus a duty of five pence farthing is paid on four fifths of the tobacco, and four pence three farthings on the other fifth; while by the plan I propose, no more than four pence three farthings

will

will be paid on the whole. It is easy to calculate how great the advantage must be to the planter and fair trader from this arrangement, which demands so small an advance, exempts them from all the inconveniences of finding sureties, and requires no payment of any consequence, till the moment when a purchaser presents himself to refund the cost.

" If it should be objected against this project, that it makes the tobacco trade a ready money business, which it cannot bear; I answer, that it may be so or not, as the parties themselves may chuse to arrange it; for if the merchant gives the consumer credit, as he now does, for the duties as well as the commodity, the objection ceases to have any weight.

" The great advantage to the public will be this, that no duty being paid on tobacco designed for exportation, an immediate stop will be put to the fraud on drawbacks, and to most of the disgraceful efforts of dishonesty, which I have previously enumerated. This fact does not require to be verified by an experiment; it is sufficiently proved by the success and facility which attend the collection of the malt duty.

" I come now to the main point, and which alone can admit of debate; the grand objection of making the dealers in tobacco subject to the laws of excise. I am aware, that on this subject I have arguments or rather assertions to encounter, which are of great import in sound, though of very little in sense. Those who deal in these general declamations stigmatize the scheme in the most unqualified manner, as tending to reduce those subjected to it to a state of slavery. This is an assertion, the fallacy of which can only be determined by comparison. There are already ten or twelve articles of consumption subjected to the excise laws; the revenue derived from them amounts to about £.3,200,000 per annum, which is appropriated to particular purposes. A great number of persons are, of course, involved in the operation of these laws; yet, till the present moment, when so inconsiderable an addition is proposed, not a word has been uttered about the dreadful hardships to be apprehended from them. These clamours of interested and disaffected persons are best answered by the contented taciturnity of those in whose behalf their arguments, if of any force, ought to operate. Are the brewers and maltsters slaves, or do they reckon themselves so? Are they not as free in elections, to elect or be elected, as any others? or let any gentleman present say, if he ever met with any opposition from, or by means of an exciseman?

" I quit this general topic to advert to more particular and specific objections: The chief of them are, houses liable to be searched; the being subject to the determination of commissioners, without appeal, who are necessarily creatures of the crown; the number of excise officers; the injury the

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subject will sustain in being tried without a jury; and the particular interest of the crown in this alteration.

“ To all these objections one general observation will apply; that if for these reasons this scheme is to be relinquished, the whole system of excise laws ought to be abandoned. But I shall examine them one by one. I begin with the last, the most cruel and unjust, because it tends to set up an improper distinction, and draw a strong line of opposition between the interests of the crown and the interests of the people; that is to say, between the estate and particular property of the crown, and the estate and particular property of the public: this naturally leads to a general consideration of the public revenues.

“ The revenues may be computed at £.6,700,000 per annum. The public has of this, as its particular interest and property, about £.5,900,000 per annum, namely, the appropriated funds and annual supplies. The proportion remaining to the crown, £.800,000, is not an eighth part of the whole. And here, in order to obviate a general misrepresentation, it is necessary to state, that the civil list revenues, in five years, from Midsummer 1727 to Midsummer 1732, have fallen short of the sum they are supposed to produce by upwards of £.26,000 a year on the average. Happy indeed would be the state of the country, if the appropriated duties would answer all the proper engagements, and leave a surplus sufficient for the current service! But if that great object is not attainable, it is surely well worth the attention of parliament to provide for a moiety, or even a fourth part of the current service. The appropriated duties were funds for paying the interest of the national debt. There had been deficiencies in several, but now a supply is made; a sinking fund for gradually discharging the principal. A million per annum has for several years been applied, and that, by the public creditors, is now thought more than sufficient.

“ If under the present management, the duties produce much less than ought to be paid to the public, has the public a right to make the most of their own revenues, or are they alone excluded from doing themselves justice? To object against the improvement of the king's part, is to say, that the public had better be defrauded of seven parts in eight, than that justice should be done to the crown in the eighth. If manifest frauds were discovered in a branch belonging entirely to the civil list, the post office, for example, would you rather sanction the wrong than do justice to the crown? Why then this unreasonable jealousy in the present instance? I call the jealousy unreasonable, because in this proposition all possible care has been taken

taken to avoid the imputation of being designed for the benefit of the crown. The penny which goes to the civil list is left to be paid at the custom-house. All increase from the inland duty is not to go to the crown but to the public. All fines, forfeitures, and penalties arising from the inland duties, are renounced by the crown, and appropriated to the public. In a word, the crown will have no interest in the inland duty, but as trustee for the public.

" This fact, duly considered, answers the great objection to the determination of commissioners. For granting, for a moment, that commissioners are to be supposed corrupt, venal, and creatures of the crown, what influence can their regard for the crown have on them, to induce them to oppress the people, when the crown has no interest in their determination? But though this answer might reasonably be deemed satisfactory and sufficient, yet to obviate even speculative objections, a remedy is supplied for this supposed grievance, by investing three of the twelve judges with a power of determining, in a summary way, all appeals brought before them within the bills of mortality; and in the country, the same power is to be vested in one of the judges of the assize going the next circuit. This renders it impossible that the interest of the subject can be sacrificed to undue influence on the one hand, or the revenue to private solicitation, personal friendship or regard on the other. While such a tribunal presents itself, no offender would chuse to be carried into Westminster hall, rather than have his cause judged in a summary way. The benefit of a trial by jury would not induce a man to encounter the tedious, vexatious, and expensive proceedings in a court of law, more burthensome than the penalties and forfeitures in dispute. As far as my own observation enables me to judge on the present system, where the commissioners have, in most cases, a power to determine themselves, or to bring informations, I have found that most people, against whom informations have been laid, have been desirous that their causes should be determined by commissioners; but I never yet heard of one who was willing to take his cause out of the hands of the commissioners to have it tried in Westminster hall. One reason which contributes to render the exercise of power by the commissioners more popular is, that they possess the privilege of mitigation, which is not entrusted to the judges, who are merely administrators of the law, according to the letter.

" The next objection is the increase of revenue officers, which fear, interest, and affectation have magnified into a standing army. This standing army, allowing the proposed addition to extend to tobacco and wine, will not, according to the estimate of the commissioners, exceed *one hundred and twenty-six* persons; that number, in addition to those already employed, will do

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do all the duty. In this computation, warehouse-keepers are of course not included, their number must be uncertain, for the satisfaction and accommodation of the merchants: Few houses, however, out of London, will be subject to the excise laws which are not so already.

"The only remaining objection is, the power of officers to enter and search houses. This objection could not possibly have any weight, without the aid of gross misconception, or misrepresentation.] All warehouses, cellars, shops, and rooms used for keeping, manufacturing, or selling tobacco, are to be entered at the inland office. These are to be always liable to the inspection of the officer, and it is to be made penal to keep or conceal tobacco in any room or place not entered. But no other part of the house is liable to be searched without a warrant and a constable, which warrant is not to be granted without an affidavit of the cause of suspicion. The practice of the customs is now stronger; they can enter with a writ of assistance without any affidavit. But why all this solicitude in the behalf of fraud? If the powers given by either, or both the systems of revenue law are not sufficient (as I am informed they are not in the case of tea) it is an argument to add more checks, but no argument against the application of this.

"The regulation in these two commodities, can affect neither trade, the poor, or the manufacturer. The poor are not at all concerned in the question of tobacco, as the retailer now sells all tobacco at the rate of duty paid. The manufacturer is concerned as little, for the same reason, and neither one or the other drinks any wine. The landed interest cannot be affected by it in consequence of an advanced charge on the poor and the manufacturer. The whole clamour then is in favour of the retailer or tradesman, and even he cannot suffer, unless guilty of frauds.

"This is the scheme which has been represented in so dreadful and terrible a light; this is the monster, the many-headed monster, which was to devour the people, and commit such ravages over the whole nation. How justly it has been represented in such a light, I shall leave to this committee and to the world without doors to judge. I have said, and will repeat it, that whatever apprehensions and terrors people may have been brought under from a false and malicious representation of what they neither did, or could know or understand, I am fully persuaded, that when they have duly considered the scheme I have now the honour to open to you, they will view it in another light; and that if it has the good fortune to meet the approbation of parliament, and comes to take effect, the people will soon feel the happy consequences of it; and when they experience these good effects, they will no longer

longer look on those persons as their friends, who have so grossly imposed on their understandings. Chapter 41.

"I look upon it as a most innocent scheme; it can be hurtful to none but smugglers and unfair traders. I am certain it will be of great benefit to the revenue, and will tend to make **LONDON A FREE PORT, AND BY CONSEQUENCE, THE MARKET OF THE WORLD.** If I had thought otherwise of it I would never have ventured to propose it in this place." 1733.

He then concluded, by moving a repeal of the subsidy and additional duty on tobacco, amounting in the whole to five pence and one third of a penny in the pound weight.

The members of opposition were not silenced or dismayed by the ample and candid manner in which the minister opened and explained his scheme, and pointed out its benefits. Though he had anticipated many of their objections, and shewn their futility, yet they brought them forward with as much confidence and perseverance as if they had been perfectly just and entirely new. The debate was long and animated; the minister was principally supported by Mr. Yorke, then attorney general, and afterwards earl of Hardwicke, and Sir Joseph Jekyll, master of the rolls. The principal orators of opposition were alderman Perry, Sir Paul Methuen, Sir John Barnard, Heathcote, Pulteney, and Sir William Wyndham, who peculiarly distinguished himself on this occasion.

Their efforts were generally directed to countenance the popular clamours, which they themselves had excited: They recurred to all the inflammatory topics drawn from the introduction of a standing army of excisemen, giving arbitrary power to the prince, and enslaving the subject. They depreciated the proposed scheme, by affecting to demonstrate, that when the manner of committing a fraud was discovered, the farther perpetration of it became impracticable. Alderman Perry, in the name of the merchants of London, offered to answer for all the bonds outstanding, in consideration of a discount of £. 20,000, but he took care to except all those which were desperate, and made no calculation of their probable amount. Sir John Barnard called in the commissioners of the customs, who were obviously interested to prevent the completion of the excise scheme, and asked them what they thought the frauds in the tobacco trade might amount to, one year with another? They answered, they had never made any computation; but one of them said that he had, as matter of private curiosity, calculated on the subject, and thought it might amount to thirty or forty thousand pounds a year. Sir John then enquired; Whether it was their opinion, that if the officers of the customs did their duty diligently and faithfully, it would effectually

Arguments of
opposition.

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fectually prevent all or most of the frauds in the tobacco trade? This was, of course, answered in the affirmative. On the basis of this loose unauthenticated information, and hardy assertion, the opposition reviled the scheme with the most unqualified abuse, and unsparing ridicule.

Pulteney said, "The honourable gentleman was pleased to dwell on the generosity of the crown in giving up the fines, forfeitures, and seizures to the public; but in my opinion, it will be a poor equivalent for the many oppressions and exactions which the people will be exposed to by this scheme. I must say, that the honourable gentleman has been, of late, mighty bountiful and liberal in his offers to the public. He has been so gracious to ask us, Will you have a land tax of two shillings in the pound? A land tax of one shilling in the pound? Or will you have no land tax at all? Will you have your debts paid? Will you have them soon paid? Tell me but what you want, let me but know how you can be made easy, and it shall be done for you. These are most generous offers; but there is something so very extraordinary, so farcical in them, that, really, I can hardly mention them without laughing: It puts me in mind of the story of Sir Epicure Mammon in the Alchymist. He was gulled of his money by fine promises; he was promised the philosopher's stone, by which he was to get mountains of gold, and every thing else he could desire; but all ended at last in *some little thing for curing the itch.*"

Sir William Wyndham made a most able and vehement speech, in which he alluded to *Empson* and *Dudley*, who, to gratify the avarice of their master, drained the purses of the subjects, not by new taxes, but by a severe and rigorous execution of the laws that had been enacted. "But what was their fate? They had the misfortune to out-live their master, and his son, as soon as he came to the throne, took off both their heads." "There never was a scheme," added he, "which encountered so much dislike and dissatisfaction from the people in general; the whole nation has already so openly declared their aversion, that I am surprised to see it insisted on; the very proposing of such a scheme in the house of commons, after so many remonstrances against it I must think most audacious; it is, in a manner, flying in the face of the whole people of England."

Walpole's
reply.

In reply to these observations, the minister said, that much of the matter thrown out by the speakers on the other side was foreign to the debate: that the ancient historians, not only of this but other countries, had been ransacked to find parallel cases of wicked ministers, and make affected applications. "Of late years (he said) I have dwelt but little in the study of history, but I have a very good prompter behind me," (meaning the attorney general) "and
by

by his means I can recollect, that the case of *Empson* and *Dudley* was so different from any thing that can possibly be presumed from the case now before us, that I wonder how it was possible to bring them into the debate. Those men had, by virtue of old and obsolete laws, unjustly extorted great sums of money from people, under pretence that they had become liable to penalties for the breach of statutes, which had for many years fallen into disuse. I must say (and I hope most of those who hear me will think) that it is very unjust to draw any parallel between their characters and mine. If my character is, or should ever come to be, in any respect, like their's, I shall deserve their fate. But while I know myself innocent, I shall depend upon the protection of the laws of my country; as long as they can protect me I am safe; and if that protection should fail, I am prepared to submit to the worst that can happen. I know that my political and ministerial life has by some gentlemen been long wished at an end, but they may ask their own disappointed hearts, how vain their wishes have been; and as for my natural life, I have lived long enough to learn to be easy about parting with it."

He then adverted to the artifices which had been used to exasperate the people, whom he compared to puppets, which persons behind the curtain played, and obliged to say whatever they pleased. He exposed the methods which had been used to draw a concourse of people to the door, such as sending circular letters by the beadles; and concluded in these words; "Gentleman may say what they please of the multitudes now at our door, and in all the avenues leading to this house; they may call them a modest multitude if they will; but whatever temper they were in when they came hither, it may be very much altered now, after having waited so long at our door. It may be very easy for some designing seditious person to raise a tumult and disorder among them, and when tumults are once begun, no man knows where they may end; he is a greater man than any I know in the nation, that could with the same ease appease them. For this reason, I think it was neither regular or prudent to use any methods for bringing such multitudes to this place, under any pretence whatever. Gentlemen may give them what name they think fit, it may be said they came hither as humble supplicants, but I know whom the law calls *sturdy beggars**, and those who

* I was informed, on the respectable authority of the late much to be regretted lord John Cavendish, that the minister used the phrase

sturdy beggars, not as a matter of reproach, but to mark that the petitioners against the excise, were formidable petitioners.

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brought them hither, could not be certain but that they might have behaved in the same manner."

After a few words from Sir John Barnard, in which he defended the assembling of people at the doors, and affectedly gave to the phrase *sturdy beggars*, that invidious sense in which it was afterwards so much repeated by the enemies of the minister, the question was called for, and passed by a majority of 61; (266 against 205.) The first resolution being thus carried, three others were put, and agreed to without a division.

Violence of
the multi-
tude.

The debate was protracted till two o'clock in the morning, an hour at that time considered extremely late. The people without were so exasperated, that as Sir Robert passed towards his carriage, some of them caught him by the cloak, and would probably have committed some violent outrage on his person, if his son, Edward Walpole, and general Churchill had not interfered.

Farther pro-
ceedings.

On the 16th Sir Charles Turner, according to order, reported to the house the proceedings of the committee. The debate was resumed with increased acrimony. Sir John Barnard, Bacon, Sir Thomas Aston, lord Morpeth, Pulteney, and Walter Plumer opposed the question, that the house should agree to the report. Horace Walpole, lord Hervey, Sir Thomas Robinson, lord Glenorchy, Clayton, and Sir Robert Walpole supported it; the house divided; the affirmative was voted by a majority of 60* (249 against 189) and Sir Charles Turner, the chancellor of the exchequer, the attorney general, the solicitor general, Doddington, Clayton, Sir William Yonge, Sir George Oxenden, Scrope, and Edward Walpole, were directed to prepare and bring in the bill.

The effect of this bill on the public mind was so great, and the ferment it occasioned so violent, that I have judged it proper to state every division which took place during its discussion. It is unnecessary to specify the particulars of the debates, which, though conducted with great asperity, contained little novelty, and were often on mere points of order, or discussion of precedents.

The bill was brought in, and read a first time, on the 4th of April. An objection was made that some parts of it were not within the compass of the resolutions, and that it should therefore be withdrawn. This was overruled by a majority of 56†; (232 against 176). A motion being then made for the house to adjourn, was negatived by 237 against 199, and another for

* Journals.

† Ibid.

the second reading on that day se'nnight was carried by a majority of 36 * ; (236 against 200.) The next day it was proposed to print the bill, and distribute a proper number of copies to the members of the house, which being opposed by the minister, was negatived by a majority of 16 † ; (128 against 112.)

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The lord mayor of London, however, contrived to obtain a copy, and laid it before the common council; who resolved to petition the house against the bill, and prayed to be heard by counsel. The petition was patronised by Sir John Barnard, and ordered to lie on the table; but their being heard by counsel was over-ruled by a majority of 17 ‡ ; (214 against 197.) The next day similar applications were made from the towns of Nottingham and Coventry. The order of the day being then read, for the second reading of the bill, Walpole moved that it should be postponed to the twelfth day of June: As it was generally understood, that the house would adjourn before that day, it was manifest, that the minister meant to abandon his scheme. This mode, however, of dropping it, did not please the patriots of opposition, they wanted it to be rejected with some severe animadversion, but though some hints were thrown out to that effect, yet the general sense of the house, which was uncommonly full, was so apparent against it, that they did not think it prudent to make any specific motion.

10th April.

Bill relinquished.

Many conjectures have been made on the motives which induced the minister to abandon his plan; but I find none so satisfactory as the dislike of counteracting the public opinion. The decline of his majority from 61 on the first, to 17 on the last division, affords no solution of his motives, for the intermediate questions were not of so much importance as the first, and though some of his friends, undoubtedly from a dread of encountering the fury of a misguided populace, retired for a time from the scene of contest, I do not find, from the printed list in the Historical Register, that more than four joined the standard of opposition. Nor is it probable that the threat of farther desertions alarmed the minister, because, if his partisans had resolved to abandon him, they would have united themselves with the opposition, and have formed a constant majority in the house against him. An anecdote recorded by one of his friends, renders it still more probable, that his unwillingness to carry any measure marked by popular disapprobation, was the true motive of his conduct.

“ On the evening before the report, Sir Robert summoned a meeting of

* Journals.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

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the principal members who had supported the bill. It was very largely attended. He reserved his own opinion till the last: But perseverance was the unanimous voice. It was urged that all taxes were obnoxious, and there would be an end of supplies, if mobs were to controul the legislature in the manner of raising them. When Sir Robert had heard them all, he assured them, "How conscious he was of having meant well; that in the present inflamed temper of the people, the act could not be carried into execution without an armed force. That there would be an end of the liberty of England, if supplies were to be raised by the sword. If, therefore, the resolution was to proceed with the bill, he would instantly request the king's permission to resign, for he would not be the minister to enforce taxes, at the expence of blood*."

Public rejoicings.

Though the house did not rise, as was expected, before the 12th of June, yet they adjourned over that day, so that the tobacco bill was dropt, and the wine bill was never brought forward. The defeat of this proposition was celebrated in London, and various parts of the kingdom, as a great national victory. Bonfires were made, effigies burnt, cockades were generally worn, inscribed with the motto of *Liberty, Property, and no Excise*; the Monument was illuminated, and every demonstration given of exuberant triumph and excessive joy. The university of Oxford gave into the same folly, and carried their rejoicings to a most indecent excess. The gownsmen joined and encouraged the mob, jacobitical cries resounded through the town, and three days passed in this disgraceful manner before the vice chancellor and proctors could restore tranquillity.

Farther efforts of opposition.

The public rejoicings, and the general aversion entertained against the excise, inspired the opposition with hopes that they would be enabled, through that medium, to embarrass government, and effect the removal of the minister, by compelling him to repeal the whole body of excise laws. With this view, a petition from the dealers in tea and coffee, praying for relief against the excise laws, as oppressive and injurious to trade, was presented, but it was rejected by 250 against 150†.

20th April.

Notwithstanding this defeat, the opposition still laboured under two gross mistakes: the first was, that many members who promoted the bill, had voted in contradiction to their real sentiments from self interest; and the second, that the king did not cordially support the minister, but waited only for a favourable opportunity of removing him. They had the mortification, however to be fully undeceived in these opinions. A sufficient proof that

* This anecdote is mentioned in "Historical Remarks on the Taxation of free States," on the authority of Mr. White, member for Retford, who lived in friendship with Sir Robert Walpole.

† Journals.

they had undervalued the number of those members who were attached to the minister soon appeared, upon a motion, for appointing by ballot a committee to enquire into the frauds in the customs. This proposal was intended to reduce the minister to a dilemma. If it had been rejected, it would have been said, that he durst not stand an inquiry into the facts which he had laid down as the principle on which the excise bill was founded: If it was carried, great hopes were entertained, that in chusing a committee by ballot, many of those members who they believed had supported the minister from a dread of incurring his displeasure, would venture to give their votes in favour of their list, in preference to the court list, when it would not be known for which list each particular person gave his vote. No opposition being made, a ballot took place, and a warm contest ensued; each side acted an open and manly part. Their respective lists contained the names of those only who were staunch friends, and the court list was carried by a majority of 85. This decisive victory put an end to the efforts and hopes of opposition for this session of parliament*.

They were no less undeceived in their opinion, that the king did not cordially support the minister. Some persons of great consequence, had also about this period joined opposition, and this defection was increased from an idea which generally prevailed, that the credit of Walpole was declining, and his disgrace certain. In the house of peers, the opposition, which had been rendered formidable by the junction of lord Carteret, was considerably increased by the defection of several who enjoyed very profitable posts under the crown: The earl of Chesterfield, lord steward of the household, the earl of Burlington, captain of the band of pensioners, lord Clinton, lord of the bed chamber, and three Scotch peers, the duke of Montrose, keeper of the great seal, the earl of Stair, vice admiral, and the earl of Marchmont, lord register. To these were added, lord Cobham, colonel of the king's regiment of horse, and the duke of Bolton, colonel of the king's regiment of horse guards. Many of these had influenced their friends in the house of commons, and particularly the three brothers of lord Chesterfield, had voted against the excise bill. It was generally believed, that the number and consequence of these peers would prevent the minister from venturing to remove them, and that the king would not consent to their dismissal or resignation. But the event proved otherwise. On the 11th of April the excise bill was abandoned; and on the 13th, as the earl of Chesterfield †, in company with lord Scarborough, was going up the great stair-case

The king
supports
Walpole.

Removals ‡

* De la Faye and Thomas Pelham, to the earl Waldegrave. Correspondence, April 26.

† Maty's Life of Lord Chesterfield. Sect. 4.

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of the palace at St. James's, he was informed by a servant of the duke of Grafton, that his master wanted to see him on business of the greatest importance; on returning home the duke of Grafton waited on him, and acquainted him that he was come by the king's command to require the surrender of the white staff, which was immediately delivered. The dismissal of Chesterfield was followed by the removal of Montrose, the earls of Stair, Burlington, and Marchmont, and lord Clinton. The resentment of the minister was carried so far, that lord Cobham and the duke of Bolton were even deprived of their regiments*.

And promotions.

The authority of the minister was also fully proved by the nomination of his confidential friends to the vacant offices, among whom the earl of Ilay was most conspicuous. His son, lord Walpole, was also made lord lieutenant of the county of Devon, in the room of lord Clinton; and all doubts of his superior influence in the cabinet, were removed by the appointment of Sir Charles Wager to the office of first lord of the admiralty, vacant by the death of lord Torrington, which took place in June. His power on this occasion was far more evident, because there was no instance, since the accession of the house of Brunswick, that a commoner was raised to that high office, and because George the Second had a strong predilection for persons of rank, and had been informed, that the family of Sir Charles Wager was not sufficiently distinguished.

It is curious to observe the veteran seaman, in a letter to Sir Robert Walpole†, found his title to that post, not on his naval services, which no one could deny, but on a fanciful genealogy. The demur, however, was over-ruled by the minister, the king's scruples were removed, the Herald's office did not stand in his way, and he was placed at the head of the admiralty, which post he continued to fill, during the administration of Walpole, with much advantage to the minister, with great benefit to his country, and with no less credit to himself.

The king, in his speech from the throne, on the prorogation of the parliament, adverted to the artifices employed to delude the minds of the people; and to pervert the truth. "I cannot pass by unobserved, the wicked endeavours that have lately been made use of to inflame the minds of the people, and by the most unjust misrepresentation to raise tumults and disorders, that almost threatened the peace of the kingdom; but I depend upon the force of truth, to remove the groundless jealousies that have been raised, of designs

* Historical Register.

† Sir Charles Wager to Sir Robert Walpole, 12 July, 1731. Correspondence, Period V.

carrying

carrying on against the liberties of my people, and upon your known fidelity, to defeat and frustrate the expectations of such as delight in confusion. It is my inclination, and has always been my study, to preserve the religious and civil rights of all my subjects. Let it be your care to undeceive the deluded, and to make them sensible of their present happiness, and the hazard they run of being unwarily drawn, by specious pretences, into their own destruction."

Chapter 42.

1734.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SECOND:

1734.

Character of Lord Hardwicke.—Parliamentary Proceedings.—Efforts of the Minority in Parliament.—The Excise.—The Removal of the Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham.—The Place Bill.—Motion for the Repeal of Septennial Parliaments.—Sir William Wyndham's Speech.—Walpole's Reply.—Bolingbroke's retreat to France.—The King's Speech.—Dissolution of Parliament.

IN consequence of the numerous removals and resignations among the peers, which had taken place the last session, the opposition in the upper house became extremely formidable, and the majority of good speakers were ranged on that side. To counterbalance this preponderancy, Sir Philip Yorke was made lord chief justice of the court of King's Bench.

This great lawyer, who sat so long and with so distinguished a character for integrity and knowledge at the head of the law, had raised himself solely by his eminent talents. The eloquence which he displayed at the bar had recommended him to notice, and in 1719 he was appointed solicitor general, in the 30th year of his age; at the same time he was re-elected for the borough of Lewes in Sussex, by the interest of his patron, the duke of Newcastle. In 1723 he was nominated attorney general, and highly distinguished himself by his prudent and able speeches in the house of commons. In October, 1733, he was constituted lord chief justice of the King's Bench, and in November, in the same year, called to the upper house, by the title of baron Hardwicke.

His character.

Period V. 1730 to 1734. Hardwicke. The style of his eloquence was more adapted to the house of lords than to the house of commons. The tone of his voice was pleasing and melodious, his manner was placid and dignified. Precision of arrangement, closeness of argument, fluency of expression, elegance of diction, great knowledge of the subject on which he spoke, were his particular characteristics. He seldom rose into great animation; his chief aim was more to convince than amuse; to appeal to the judgment rather than to the feelings of his auditors. He possessed a perfect command over himself, and his even temper was never ruffled by petulant opposition, or malignant invective.

Meeting of parliament. The parliament assembled on the 17th January, and as it was the last session, the minority exerted their utmost efforts to distress the minister, and to increase his unpopularity.

The plan of attack was in this, as in the session of 1730, principally formed by Bolingbroke; and under his auspices, and by his direction, ably conducted by Sir William Wyndham, who seems to have particularly distinguished himself in the debates.

Efforts of the minority. They first tried their strength in various motions for papers and copies of instructions which were sent to the British ministers in France and Spain; for an address to know how far the king was engaged by his good offices in the causes of the war against the Emperor; and for an account of what application had been made by the parties engaged in hostilities. In these motions their exertions were baffled by the minister, and the smallest majority in his favour was 95. Having exhausted their efforts in regard to foreign transactions, in which he appeared to be most vulnerable, they directed their views to domestic events.

February 4. Petition against the excise. They attempted to renew the public clamours about the excise, and to accuse the minister of not having totally relinquished that scheme; and of waiting only for a favourable opportunity of again introducing it. For this purpose a petition being again presented from the druggists, and other dealers in tea, for relief against the excise laws, some of the leading members of opposition took this opportunity of attempting to revive the debate, and were inexcusably personal in their invectives against the minister. Pulteney in particular observed, "I am persuaded he still entertains the same opinion of the excise, and waits only for a proper opportunity to renew it; for which reason he is unwilling that we should go into such a committee as is now proposed, lest we should sap all the foundations of any future project for a farther extension of the excise laws." The reply of the minister to this insinuation was direct and manly. After repelling the attacks with equal spirit and energy, he

he said, "As to the wicked scheme, as the gentleman was pleased to call it, which he would persuade gentlemen is not yet laid aside, I, for my part, assure this house, I am not so mad as ever again to engage in any thing that looks like an excise, though in my own private opinion, I still think it was a scheme that would have tended very much to the interest of the nation, and I am convinced that all the clamours without doors, and a great part of the opposition it met with every where, was founded upon artful falsehoods, misrepresentations, and insinuations, that such things were intended as had never entered into the thoughts of any man with whom I am acquainted." In consequence of this explicit declaration, the assertions of the contrary side made little impression on the house, and the question for referring the petition to a committee, was negatived by 233 against 155*.

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The spirit of opposition was carried to such an excess, that the minority not only resisted every measure of government with unabating pertinacity, but brought forwards a question that had a direct tendency to undermine and destroy the constitution which they affected so zealously to admire. In fact, this attempt had so direct a tendency to renew that military independence, which in the last century had subverted the throne, and enslaved the people, that even those writers who, in other respects, invariably decry the Walpole administration, have not scrupled to reprobate this proposal, though it was supported with all the strength of their favourite party†. The motion related to the removal of the duke of Bolton and lord Cobham from their military commands.

Debates on
the removal
of the duke
of Bolton and
lord Cobham;

Lord Morpeth, after the reading of the mutiny bill, rose, and concluded a speech full of trite reflections on a standing army, under the influence of the crown, on the danger of arbitrary power, and some inapplicable and erroneous allusions to the constitution of Holland and Sweden, by moving for leave to bring in a bill "for securing the constitution, by preventing officers, not above the rank of colonels of regiments, from being deprived of their commissions, otherwise than by judgment of a court martial to be held for that purpose, or by address of either house of parliament." 13th Feb.

This motion was argued at great length, and with uncommon warmth; but though ancient and modern history was ransacked, and every topic introduced which ingenuity could suggest, few observations worthy of record were produced. The minority were fully employed in defending their proposition against the charges with which it was overwhelmed by the ministerial advocates.

* Chandler. Journals.

† Smollett, book. 2. chap. 5.—Belsham, vol. 1. p. 340.

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Walpole concluded the debate *, with a speech replete with sound principles and constitutional doctrines. He defended not only the prerogative of the crown, but the interest of parliament, and the well-being of the community, against the horrible despotism of a stratocracy, or army government; vindicated the purity of court martials, and deprecated the evils which would result to the service from subjecting them to the influence of intrigue, and making their decisions the mean of retaining or forfeiting a post for life. "The behaviour of an officer, he observed, may be influenced by malice, revenge, and faction, and on the pretence of honour and conscience; and if ever any officer of the army, because the king refused to comply with some very unreasonable demand, should resolve to oppose in every thing the measures of government, I should think any man a most pitiful minister if he should be afraid of advising his majesty to cashier such an officer. On the contrary, I shall leave it as a legacy to all future ministers †, that upon every occasion, it is their duty to advise their master that such a man is unfit to have any command in his armies. Our king has, by his prerogative, a power of placing, preferring, and removing any officer he pleases, either in our army or militia: It is by that prerogative chiefly, he is enabled to execute our laws, and preserve the peace of the kingdom: if a wrong use should be made of that prerogative, his ministers are accountable for it to parliament; but it cannot be taken from him or diminished without overturning our constitution; for our present happy constitution may be overturned by republican, as well as by arbitrary schemes. Therefore it must be left to his majesty to judge by what motives an officer acts, and if he thinks an officer acts from bad motives, in duty to himself, he ought to remove him." He then expatiated on the danger of a dictatorship from the measure proposed, and concluded with the constitutional apothegm:

"Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari."

The question was negatived without a division ‡.

Foiled in this attempt, the opposition renewed the attack on a ground more plausible and popular, that of personal inquiry. Sandys moved for an address, "humbly to desire his majesty, graciously to inform the house, by whose advice he had been pleased to discharge the duke of Bolton and lord Cobham, and what crimes were alledged against them." Pulteney seconded the motion. The ministry discerning the views of their opponents,

* Lord Catherlogh said a few words after him, but they contained a simple dissent, unenforced by argument, expressive only of the obligations of the army to the movers of the question.

† Opinions of the Dukes of Marlborough, p. 105. These words are erroneously attributed to Mr. Pelham, by Chandler.

‡ Chandler. Journals.

and

and knowing that to discuss the question would produce the same effect as pleading to a specific charge, by letting loose on them all the powers of invective, and all the arts of misrepresentation, declined the contest; they made no reply, but called for the question. Sir William Wyndham in vain attempted, by reproaches and invectives, to provoke a debate, the question was again called for, and on a division, negatived by 252 against 193*.

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On the same day the duke of Marlborough brought into the house of lords, a bill similar to that in the commons, but it was thrown out after the first reading. A motion to the same purport as that of Sandys, was made by lord Carteret, but rejected. Protests on both occasions were entered on the journals, signed by upwards of thirty peers, and the duke of Bolton and lord Cobham separately signed a short and manly protest.

Another measure of opposition, calculated to render themselves popular, was to revive a self-denying ordinance, which had excited much clamour in the reign of king William, and, after great opposition, had formed an article among the limitations in the act of settlement, but had been afterwards repealed. It was intitled a bill for securing the freedom of parliament, by limiting the number of officers (both civil and military) in the house of commons. Several friends of the minister were strongly inclined to favour the bill, and others could not venture to oppose so popular a question at the eve of a general election.

On the place
bill;

February 26.

The motion was also so agreeable to the sentiments of many among the Whigs, who usually supported government, that the minister did not use his influence on this occasion. He did not even speak in the debate, but contented himself with giving a silent vote, as he did on the pension bill. For these reasons it was negatived by a very small majority of 230 against 191†. But a small majority on this single question had no effect on the general state of parties. It fully proved the judgment of Walpole, in not committing himself in subjects of so much delicacy, or pressing his adherents to vote in opposition to popular predilections.

But the question on which the opposition founded their principal hopes, if not of success, at least of embarrassing the minister, was a proposal to repeal the septennial bill, which was first introduced on this occasion, and afterwards annually renewed.

On the repeal
of the septennial
bill;

It had been long a matter of surprise, that a question which was so well calculated to increase their popularity, had not been proposed before. But the fact was, that in this particular instance the opposition was divided. The Tories and Jacobites, who had strenuously resisted the introduction of

* Journals.

† Ibid.

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the bill, could not obtain the co-operation of the disaffected Whigs, as it seemed to imply a dereliction of their principles, to vote for the repeal of a bill which they had once thought necessary for the security of the Protestant succession. At the repeated instigations of Bolingbroke, Sir William Wyndham and the leading Tories persisted, and at length carried their point. The Whigs reluctantly complied, and proved, by their manner of conducting the debate, the awkward situation in which they were placed. The motion was made by Bromley, and seconded by Sir John St. Aubyn. The only Whigs of any consequence who spoke for the question, were Sir John Barnard, who said only a few words, and Pulteney, who rose late in the debate. He made a short speech, and prefaced it with an apology for his apparent inconsistency, in voting for the repeal of a bill which he had supported at the time of its introduction.

The speech of Sir William Wyndham on this occasion, is triumphantly quoted by the modern writers who uniformly stigmatise the Walpole administration, as a master-piece of eloquence and energy; they state his arguments as unanswerable. At the same time these partial reporters never advert to the reply of Sir Robert Walpole, but leave the reader to suppose that scarcely any answer was made, and that the whole strength of the argument lay on the side of opposition *.

To abridge or detail printed debates, without illustrating them by any new documents, is not the general purport of this work. But on this occasion, where there has been such a wilful suppression of the argument on one side, and such an affected display of the reasoning on the other, it will be almost as great a novelty to give the speech of the minister, as if it had never been in print. I have therefore inserted the Philippic of Sir William Wyndham, and Walpole's reply, verbatim, from contemporary narratives †.

* Smollet, in recording this transaction, has characterised Sir William Wyndham, by saying that, "His speech spoke him the unrivalled orator, the uncorrupted Briton, and the unshaken patriot." He gives only that part of the speech which relates to the character of Walpole, and concludes, "Notwithstanding the most warm, the most nervous, the most pathetic remonstrances in favour of the motion, the question was put, and it was suppressed by mere dint of numbers, vol. 2. p. 495. If Smollet means any thing by this relation, it must be that no reply was made to the argument of his admired orator, but that the business was got rid of by the cry of *Question! Question!* Belsham has thus related the transaction: "The minister having defied the opposition to adduce a single

instance, in which the interests of the nation had been injured by the operation of this bill, or by any undue exercise of the royal prerogative connected with it, Sir William Wyndham observed," &c. After quoting Sir William Wyndham's speech, he adds, without taking the smallest notice of Sir Robert Walpole's reply, "Notwithstanding the admiration excited by this sudden burst of eloquence, and the ability with which the motion of repeal was supported by various other speakers, it was negatived on the division, though not by the accustomed ministerial majority, the numbers being 247 against 184."

† Political State of Great Britain.—Historical Register.—See also Chandler.

After

After a short reply to Sir William Yonge, who preceded him, and justifying the assertions of Sir John Barnard, who spoke in favour of the motion, Sir William Wyndham vindicated the triennial bill from the objections of those who declared that it was introduced by the enemies of the revolution, he added, "The learned gentleman has told us, that the septennial law is a proper medium between the unlimited power of the crown, and the limiting that power too much; but before he had fixed upon this as a medium, he should first have discovered to us the two extremes. I will readily allow, that an unlimited power in the crown, with respect to the continuing of parliaments, is one extreme; but the other I cannot really find out; for I am very far from thinking, that the power of the crown was too much limited by the triennial law, or that the happiness of the nation was any way injured by it, or can ever be injured by frequent elections. As to the power of the crown, it is very certain, that as long as the administration of public affairs is agreeable to the generality of the people, were they to chuse a new parliament every year, they would chuse such representatives as would most heartily concur in every thing with such an administration; so that even an annual parliament could not be any limitation of the just power of the crown; and as to the happiness of the nation, it is certain, that gentlemen will always contend with more heat and animosity about being members of a long parliament, than about being members of a short one; and therefore the elections for a septennial parliament must always disturb the peace, and injure the happiness of the nation, more than the elections for an annual or triennial parliament: Of this the elections in the city of London, mentioned by my worthy friend, are an evident demonstration.

"As to the elections coming on when the nation is in a ferment, it is so far from being an objection to frequent elections, that it is, in my opinion, a strong argument in favour of them; because it is one of the chief supporters of the freedom of the nation. It is plain, that the people seldom or ever were in a ferment, but when encroachments were made upon their rights and privileges; and when any such are made, it is very proper, nay, it is even necessary, that the people should be allowed to proceed to a new election, in order that they may chuse such representatives as will do them justice, by punishing those who have been making encroachments upon them. Otherwise, one of these two effects may very probably ensue: either the ferment will break out into an open insurrection, or the encroachment that has been made, may happen to be forgot before a new election comes on, and then the invaders of the people's rights will have a much better lay for getting such a new parliament chosen, as will not only free them from all punishment,

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ment, but will confirm the encroachments that have been made, and encourage the making of new. Thus the rights of the people may be nibbled and curtailed by piecemeal, and ambitious criminals may at last get themselves so firmly seated, that it will be out of the power of the people to stop their career, or to avoid the chains which they are preparing.

"Now, to return to the power of the crown, which the learned gentleman has told us was too much limited by the triennial law; I think I have made it plain, that the just power of the crown cannot possibly be limited by frequent elections, and consequently could not be too much limited by the triennial law; but by long parliaments the crown may be enabled to assume, and to make use of an unjust power. By our constitution, the only legal method we have of vindicating our rights and privileges against the encroachments of ambitious ministers is by parliament; the only way we have of rectifying a weak or wicked administration is by parliament; the only effectual way we have of bringing high and powerful criminals to condign punishment is by parliament. But if ever it should come to be in the power of the administration to have a majority of this house depending upon the crown, or to get a majority of such men returned as the representatives of the people, the parliament will then stand us in no stead. It can answer none of these great purposes; the whole nation may be convinced of the weakness or the wickedness of those in the administration, and yet it may be out of the nation's power, in a legal way, to get the fools turned out, or the knaves hanged.

"This misfortune can be brought upon us by nothing but by bribery and corruption; and therefore there is nothing we ought to guard more watchfully against. And an honourable gentleman who spoke some time ago, upon the same side with me, has so clearly demonstrated, that the elections for a septennial parliament are more liable to be influenced by corruption than those for a triennial, that I am surprised his argument should be mistaken or not comprehended: But it seems the most certain maxims, the plainest truths, are now to be controverted or denied. It has been laid down as a maxim, and I think it is a most infallible maxim, that a man will contend with more heat and vigour, for a post, either of honour or profit, which he is to hold for a long term, than he will do for one he is to hold for a short term. This has been controverted: It has been laid down as a maxim, and I think equally infallible, that 100 guineas is a more powerful bribe than 50; this has been denied; yet nevertheless I must beg leave to push the argument a little farther.

"Let us suppose a gentleman at the head of the administration, whose only safety

safety depends upon corrupting the members of this house: this may now be only a supposition, but it is certainly such a one as may happen; and if ever it should, let us see if such a minister might not promise himself more success in a septennial, than he could in a triennial parliament. It is an old maxim, that every man has his price, if you can but come up to it: this, I hope, does not hold true of every man, but I am afraid it too generally holds true; and that of a great many it may hold true, is what I believe was never doubted of, though I don't know but it may now likewise be denied. However, let us suppose this distressed minister applying to one of those men who has a price, and is a member of this house: in order to engage this member to vote as he shall direct him, he offers him a pension of £. 1,000 a year. If it be but a triennial parliament, will not the member immediately consider within himself, if I accept of this pension, and vote according to direction, I shall lose my character in the country, I shall lose my seat in parliament the next election, and my pension will then of course be at an end; so that by turning rogue I shall get but £. 3,000, this is not worth my while; and so the minister must either offer him, perhaps double that sum, or otherwise he will probably determine against being corrupted. But if the parliament were septennial, the same man might perhaps say within himself, I am now in for seven years, by accepting of this pension I shall have at least £. 7,000, this will set me above contempt; and if I am turned out at next election, I do not value it, I'll take the money in the mean time. Is it not very natural to suppose all this; and does not this evidently shew, that a wicked minister cannot corrupt a triennial parliament with the same money with which he may corrupt a septennial.

"Again, suppose this minister applies to a gentleman who has purchased, and thereby made himself member for a borough, at the rate of, perhaps, £. 1,500, besides travelling charges, and other little expences; suppose the minister offers him a pension of £. 500 a year to engage his vote, will not he naturally consider, if it be a triennial parliament, that if he cannot get a higher pension he will lose money by being a member; and surely, if he be a right burgher, he will resolve not to sell at all, rather than sell his commodity for less than it cost him; and if he finds he cannot sell at all, he will probably give over standing a candidate again upon such a footing; by which, not only he, but many others, will be induced to give over dealing in corrupting the electors at the next election. But in case it be a septennial parliament, will he not then probably accept of the £. 500 pension, if he be one of those men that has a price? because he concludes that for £. 1,500, he may always secure his election; and every parliament will put near
£. 2,000

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£. 2,000 in his pocket, besides reimbursing him all his charges. After viewing the present question in this light, is it possible not to conclude, that septennial parliaments, as well as the elections for such, must always be much more liable to be influenced by corruption than triennial, or elections for triennial.

"For my own part, I have been often chosen, I have sat in parliament above these twenty years, and I can say with truth, that neither at my election, nor after my return, no man ever dared to attempt to let me know what is meant by bribery and corruption; but am sorry to hear the impossibility of preventing it mentioned, and mentioned too within these walls. The honourable gentleman who spoke last, told us, the evil of corruption was inevitable: if I were so unhappy as to think so, I should look upon my country to be in the most melancholy situation. Perhaps it may be the way of thinking among those he keeps company with; but I thank God I have a better opinion of my countrymen; and since it appears to be a way of thinking among some gentlemen, it is high time for us to contrive some method of putting it out of their power to corrupt the virtue of the people. For we may depend upon this as a certain maxim, that those who think they cannot gain the affections of the people, will endeavour to purchase their prostitution; and the best way to prevent the success of their endeavours, is to raise the price so high, as to put it out of the power of any man, or of any set of men, to come up to it. If a parliament is to be purchased, if elections are to be purchased, it is manifest the corrupting of triennial must, upon the whole, cost a great deal more than the corrupting of septennial elections or parliaments. Therefore, in order to put it out of the power of any man, or of any administration, to purchase the prostitution of a parliament, or of the people, let us return to triennial parliaments; and if that will not do, let us return to annual elections, which, I am very certain, would render the practice of corruption impossible. This is now the more necessary, because of the many new posts and places of profit which the crown has at its disposal, and the great civil list settled upon his present majesty, and which will probably be continued to his successors: this, I say, urges the necessity for frequent new parliaments, because the crown has it now more in their power than formerly to seduce the people, or the representatives of the people, in case any future administration should find it necessary for their own safety to do so.

"That the increase or decrease of corruption at elections, or in parliament, must always depend upon the increase or decrease of virtue among the people;

ple, I shall readily grant; but it is as certain, that the virtue of almost every particular man, depends upon the temptations that are thrown in his way; and according to the quantity of virtue he has, the quantity of the temptation must be raised, so as at last to make it an over-balance for his virtue. Suppose, then, that the generality of the electors in England had virtue enough to withstand a temptation of five guineas each, but not virtue enough to withstand a temptation of ten guineas one with another. Is it not then much more probable, that the gentlemen who deal in corruption, may be able to raise as much money once every seven years, as will be sufficient to give ten guineas each, one with another, to the generality of the electors, than that they will be able to raise such a sum once in every three years? And is it not from thence certain, that the virtue of the people in general is in greater danger of being destroyed by septennial than by triennial parliaments? To suppose that every man's vote at an election, is like a commodity, which must be sold at the market price, is really to suppose that no man has any virtue at all. For I will aver, that when once a man resolves to sell his vote at any rate, he has then no virtue left, which, I hope, is not the case of many of our electors, and therefore the only thing we are to apprehend is, lest so high a price should be offered as may tempt thousands to sell, who had never before any thoughts of carrying such a commodity to market. This is the fatal event we are to dread, and it is much more to be dreaded from septennial than triennial parliaments. If we have therefore any desire to preserve the virtue of our people; if we have any desire to preserve our constitution; if we have any desire to preserve our liberties, our properties, and every thing that can be dear to a free people, we ought to restore the triennial law; and if that be found to be insignificant, we ought to abolish prorogations, and return to annual elections.

"The learned gentleman spoke of the prerogative of the crown, and asked, if it had lately been extended beyond those bounds prescribed to it by law? I will not say that there has been lately any attempts to extend it beyond the bounds prescribed by law; but I will say, those bounds have been of late so vastly enlarged, that there seems to be no great occasion for any such attempt. What are the many penal laws made within these forty years, but so many extensions of the prerogative of the crown, and as many diminutions of the liberty of the subject? And whatever the necessity was that brought us into the enacting of such laws, it was a fatal necessity; it has greatly added to the power of the crown, and particular care ought to be taken not to throw any more weight into that scale. Perhaps the enacting of several of those penal laws might have been avoided; I am persuaded the enacting of the

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law relating to trials for treason, not only might, but ought to have been avoided; for though it was but a temporary law, it was a dangerous precedent; and the rebellion was far from being so general in any county, as not to leave a sufficient number of faithful subjects for trying those who had committed acts of treason within the county.

"In former times the crown had a large estate of its own; an estate sufficient for supporting the dignity of the crown; and as we had no standing armies, nor any great fleets to provide for, the crown did not want frequent supplies; so that they were not under any necessity of calling frequent parliaments. And as parliaments were always troublesome, often dangerous to ministers, therefore they avoided the calling of any such as much as possible. But though the crown did not then want frequent supplies, the people frequently wanted a redress of grievances, which could not be obtained but by parliament; therefore the only complaint then was, that the crown either did not call any parliament at all, or did not allow them to sit long enough. This was the only complaint; and to remedy this, it was thought sufficient to provide for having frequent parliaments, every one of which, it was presumed, was always to be a new parliament; for it is well known, that the method of prorogation was of old very rarely made use of, and was first introduced by those who were attempting to make encroachments upon the rights of the people.

"But now the case is altered. The crown, either by ill management, or by prodigality and profuseness to its favourites, has spent or granted away all that estate; and the public expence is so much enlarged, that the crown must have annual supplies, and is therefore under a necessity of having the parliament meet every year. But as new elections are always dangerous as well as troublesome to ministers of state, they are for having them as seldom as possible; so that the complaint is not now for want of frequent meetings or sessions of parliament, but against having the same parliament continued too long. This is the grievance now complained of; this is what the people desire; this is what they have a right to have redressed. The members of parliament may for one year be looked on as the real and true representatives of the people; but when a minister has seven years to practise on them, and to feel their pulses, they may be induced to forget whose representatives they are; they may throw off all dependance upon their electors, and may become dependants upon the crown, or rather upon the minister for the time being, which the learned gentleman has most ingenuously confessed to us, he thinks less dangerous than a dependance upon his electors.

"We have been told in this house, that no faith is to be given to prophecies, therefore

therefore I shall not pretend to prophecy; but I may suppose a case, which, though it has not yet happened, may possibly happen. Let us then suppose a man abandoned to all notions of virtue or honour, of no great family, and of but a mean fortune, raised to be chief minister of state, by the concurrence of many whimsical events; afraid or unwilling to trust any but creatures of his own making, and most of them equally abandoned to all notions of virtue and honour; ignorant of the true interest of his country, and consulting nothing but that of enriching and aggrandizing himself and his favourites; in foreign affairs trusting none but such whose education makes it impossible for them to have such knowledge or such qualifications as can either be of service to their country, or give any weight or credit to their negotiations. Let us suppose the true interest of the nation by such means neglected or misunderstood, her honour and credit lost, her trade insulted, her merchants plundered, and her sailors murdered; and all these things overlooked, only for fear his administration should be endangered. Suppose him next possessed of great wealth, the plunder of the nation, with a parliament of his own chusing, most of their seats purchased, and their votes bought at the expence of the public treasure. In such a parliament, let us suppose attempts made to enquire into his conduct, or to relieve the nation from the distress he has brought upon it; and when lights proper for attaining those ends are called for, not perhaps for the information of the particular gentlemen who call for them, but because nothing can be done in a parliamentary way, until these things be in a proper way laid before parliament. Suppose these lights refused, these reasonable requests rejected by a corrupt majority of his creatures, whom he retains in daily pay, or engages in his particular interest, by granting them those posts and places which ought never to be given to any but for the good of the public. Upon this scandalous victory, let us suppose this chief minister pluming himself in defiance, because he finds he has got a parliament, like a packed jury, ready to acquit him at all adventures. Let us farther suppose him arrived to that degree of insolence and arrogance, as to domineer over all the men of ancient families, all the men of sense, figure, or fortune in the nation; and as he has no virtue of his own, ridiculing it in others, and endeavouring to destroy or corrupt in all.

“I am still not prophesying, I am only supposing; and the case I am going to suppose, I hope never will happen; but with such a minister, and such a parliament, let us suppose a prince upon the throne, either for want of true information, or for some other reason, ignorant and unacquainted with the inclinations and the interest of his people, weak, and hurried away by unbound-

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ed ambition and insatiable avarice. This case has never happened in this nation; I hope, I say, it will never exist; but as it is possible it may, could there any greater curse happen to a nation, than such a prince on the throne, advised, and solely advised by such a minister, and that minister supported by such a parliament. The nature of mankind cannot be altered by human laws, the existence of such a prince, or such a minister, we cannot prevent by act of parliament; but the existence of such a parliament I think we may: and as such a parliament is much more likely to exist, and may do more mischief while the septennial law remains in force, than if it were repealed, therefore I am most heartily for the repeal of it."

After the intervention of a short speech from Henry Pelham, and another from Pulteney, Sir Robert Walpole thus addressed the chair;

Walpole's
reply.

"Sir, I do assure you, I did not intend to have troubled you in this debate, but such incidents now generally happen towards the end of our debates, nothing at all relating to the subject, and gentlemen make such suppositions, meaning some person, or perhaps, as they say, no person now in being, and talk so much of wicked ministers, domineering ministers, ministers pluming themselves in defiance, which terms, and such like, have been of late so much made use of in this house, that if they really mean no body either in the house or out of it, yet it must be supposed they at least mean to call upon some gentleman in this house to make them a reply; and therefore I hope I may be allowed to draw a picture in my turn; and I may likewise say, that I do not mean to give a description of any particular person now in being. When gentlemen talk of ministers abandoned to all sense of virtue or honour, other gentlemen may, I am sure, with equal justice, and, I think, more justly, speak of anti-ministers and mock-patriots, who never had either virtue or honour, but in the whole course of their opposition are actuated only by motives of envy, and of resentment against those who have disappointed them in their views, or may not perhaps have complied with all their desires.

"But now, Sir, let me too suppose, and the house being cleared, I am sure no person that hears me can come within the description of the person I am to suppose. Let us suppose in this, or in some other unfortunate country, an anti-minister, who thinks himself a person of so great and extensive parts, and of so many eminent qualifications, that he looks upon himself as the only person in the kingdom capable to conduct the public affairs of the nation, and therefore christening every other gentleman who has the honour to be employed in the administration, by the name of blunderer. Suppose this fine gentleman lucky enough to have gained over to his party some persons really of fine parts,

parts, of ancient families, and of great fortunes, and others of desperate views, arising from disappointed and malicious hearts; all these gentlemen, with respect to their political behaviour, moved by him, and by him solely; all they say, either in private or public, being only a repetition of the words he has put into their mouths, and a spitting out that venom which he has infused into them; and yet we may suppose this leader not really liked by any, even of those who so blindly follow him, and hated by all the rest of mankind. We will suppose this anti-minister to be in a country where he really ought not to be, and where he could not have been but by an effect of too much goodness and mercy, yet endeavouring, with all his might and with all his art, to destroy the fountain from whence that mercy flowed. In that country suppose him continually contracting friendships and familiarities with the embassadors of those princes who at the time happen to be most at enmity with his own; and if at any time it should happen to be for the interest of any of those foreign ministers to have a secret divulged to them, which might be highly prejudicial to his native country, as well as to all its friends; suppose this foreign minister applying to him, and he answering, I will get it you, tell me but what you want, I will endeavour to procure it for you: upon this he puts a speech or two in the mouths of some of his creatures, or some of his new converts; what he wants is moved for in parliament, and when so very reasonable a request as this is refused, suppose him and his creatures and tools, by his advice, spreading the alarm over the whole nation, and crying out, gentlemen, our country is at present involved in many dangerous difficulties, all which we would have extricated you from, but a wicked minister and a corrupt majority refused us the proper materials; and upon this scandalous victory, this minister became so insolent as to plume himself in defiance. Let us farther suppose this anti-minister to have travelled, and at every court where he was, thinking himself the greatest minister, and making it his trade to betray the secrets of every court where he had before been; void of all faith or honour, and betraying every master he ever served. I could carry my suppositions a great deal farther, and I may say I mean no person now in being; but if we can suppose such a one, can there be imagined a greater disgrace to human nature than such a wretch as this?

“Now, to be serious, and to talk really to the subject in hand. Though the question has been already so fully and so handsomely opposed by my worthy friend under the gallery, by the learned gentleman near me, and by several others, that there is no great occasion to say any thing farther against it; yet as some new matter has been stated by some of the gentlemen who have since
that

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that time spoke upon the other side of the question, I hope the house will indulge me the liberty of giving some of those reasons which induce me to be against the motion. In general I must take notice, that the nature of our constitution seems to be very much mistaken by the gentlemen who have spoken in favour of this motion. It is certain, that our's is a mixed government, and the perfection of our constitution consists in this, that the monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical forms of government are mixed and interwoven in our's, so as to give us all the advantages of each, without subjecting us to the dangers and inconveniences of either. The democratical form of government, which is the only one I have now occasion to take notice of, is liable to these inconveniences, that they are generally too tedious in their coming to any resolution, and seldom brisk and expeditious enough in carrying their resolutions into execution: that they are always wavering in their resolutions, and never steady in any of the measures they resolve to pursue; and that they are often involved in factions, seditions and insurrections, which exposes them to be made the tools, if not the prey of their neighbours. Therefore in all the regulations we make, with respect to our constitution, we are to guard against running too much into that form of government which is properly called democratical: this was, in my opinion, the effect of the triennial law, and will again be the effect, if ever it should be restored.

“That triennial elections would make our government too tedious in all their resolves is evident; because in such case, no prudent administration would ever resolve upon any measure of consequence, till they had felt not only the pulse of the parliament, but the pulse of the people; and the ministers of state would always labour under this disadvantage, that as secrets of state must not be immediately divulged, their enemies (and enemies they will always have) would have a handle for exposing their measures, and rendering them disagreeable to the people, and thereby carrying perhaps a new election against them, before they could have an opportunity of justifying their measures, by divulging those facts and circumstances from whence the justice and the wisdom of their measures would clearly appear.

“Then, it is by experience well known, that what is called the populace of every country, are apt to be too much elated with success, and too much dejected with every misfortune. This makes them wavering in their opinions about affairs of state, and never long of the same mind; and as this house is chosen by the free and unbiassed voice of the people in general, if this choice were so often renewed, we might expect, that this house would be as wavering and as unsteady as the people usually are; and it being impossible to

carry

carry on the public affairs of the nation without the concurrence of this house, the ministers would always be obliged to comply, and consequently would be obliged to change their measures as often as the people changed their minds.

“With septennial parliaments we are not exposed to either of these misfortunes, because, if the ministers, after having felt the pulse of the parliament, which they can always soon do, resolve upon any measures, they have generally time enough before the new election comes on, to give the people a proper information, in order to shew them the justice and the wisdom of the measures they have pursued; and if the people should at any time be too much elated, or too much dejected, or should without a cause change their minds, those at the helm of affairs have time to set them right, before a new election comes on.

“As to faction and sedition, I will grant, that in monarchical and aristocratical governments, it generally arises from violence and oppression; but in democratical governments, it always arises from the people’s having too great a share in the government. For in all countries, and in all governments, there always will be many factious and unquiet spirits, who can never be at rest, either in power or out of power. When in power they are never easy, unless every man submits entirely to their direction; and when out of power, they are always working and intriguing against those that are in, without any regard to justice, or to the interest of their country. In popular governments such men have too much game, they have too many opportunities for working upon and corrupting the minds of the people, in order to give them a bad impression of, and to raise discontents against those that have the management of the public affairs for the time; and these discontents often break out into seditions and insurrections. This would, in my opinion, be our misfortune, if our parliaments were either annual or triennial: by such frequent elections, there would be so much power thrown into the hands of the people, as would destroy that equal mixture, which is the beauty of our constitution. In short, our government would really become a democratical government, and might from thence very probably diverge into a tyrannical. Therefore, in order to preserve our constitution, in order to prevent our falling under tyranny and arbitrary power, we ought to preserve that law, which I really think has brought our constitution to a more equal mixture, and consequently to a greater perfection than it was ever in before that law took place.

“As to bribery and corruption, if it were possible to influence, by such base means, the majority of the electors of Great Britain, to chuse such men as would probably give up their liberties; if it were possible to influence, by such

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such means, a majority of the members of this house to consent to the establishment of arbitrary power, I should readily allow, that the calculations made by the gentlemen of the other side were just, and their inference true; but I am persuaded that neither of these is possible. As the members of this house generally are, and must always be, gentlemen of fortune and figure in their country, is it possible to suppose, that any of them could by a pension or a post be influenced to consent to the overthrow of our constitution, by which the enjoyment, not only of what he got, but of what he before had, would be rendered altogether precarious. I will allow, that with respect to bribery, the price must be higher or lower, generally in proportion to the virtue of the man who is to be bribed; but it must likewise be granted, that the humour he happens to be in at the time, and the spirit he happens to be endowed with, adds a great deal to his virtue. When no encroachments are made upon the rights of the people, when the people do not think themselves in any danger, there may be many of the electors, who, by a bribe of ten guineas, might be induced to vote for one candidate rather than another; but if the court were making any encroachments upon the rights of the people, a proper spirit would, without doubt, arise in the nation, and in such a case I am persuaded that none, or very few, even of such electors, could be induced to vote for a court candidate, no not for ten times the sum.

"There may be some bribery and corruption in the nation, I am afraid there will always be some. But it is no proof of it that strangers are sometimes chosen; for a gentleman may have so much natural influence over a borough in his neighbourhood, as to be able to prevail with them to chuse any person he pleases to recommend; and if upon such recommendation they chuse one or two of his friends, who are perhaps strangers to them, it is not from thence to be inferred, that the two strangers were chosen their representatives by the means of bribery and corruption.

"To insinuate that money may be issued from the public treasury for bribing elections, is really something very extraordinary, especially in those gentlemen who know how many checks are upon every shilling that can be issued from thence; and how regularly the money granted in one year for the service of the nation, must always be accounted for the very next sessions in this house, and likewise in the other, if they have a mind to call for any such account. And as to gentlemen in offices, if they have any advantage over country gentlemen, in having something else to depend on besides their own private fortunes, they have likewise many disadvantages: they are obliged to live here

here at London with their families, by which they are put to a much greater expence, than gentlemen of equal fortune who live in the country. This lays them under a very great disadvantage in supporting their interest in the country. The country gentleman, by living among the electors, and purchasing the necessaries for his family from them, keeps up an acquaintance and correspondence with them, without putting himself to any extraordinary charge; whereas a gentleman who lives in London, has no other way of keeping up an acquaintance and correspondence among his friends in the country, but by going down once or twice a year, at a very extraordinary expence, and often without any other business; so that we may conclude, a gentleman in office cannot, even in seven years, save much for distributing in ready money at the time of an election; and I really believe, if the fact were narrowly inquired into, it would appear, that the gentlemen in office are as little guilty of bribing their electors with ready money, as any other set of gentlemen in the kingdom.

“That there are ferments often raised among the people without any just cause, is what I am surprised to hear controverted, since very late experience may convince us of the contrary: do not we know what a ferment was raised in the nation towards the latter end of the late queen’s reign? And it is well known what a fatal change in the affairs of this nation was introduced, or at least confirmed, by an election coming on while the nation was in that ferment. Do not we know what a ferment was raised in the nation soon after his late majesty’s accession? And if an election had then been allowed to come on while the nation was in that ferment, it might perhaps have had as fatal effects as the former; but, thank God, this was wisely provided against by the very law which is now wanted to be repealed.

“It has, indeed, been said, that the chief motive for enacting that law now no longer exists: I cannot admit that the motive they mean was the chief motive; but even that motive is very far from having entirely ceased. Can gentlemen imagine, that in the spirit raised in the nation not above a twelve-month since, Jacobitism and disaffection to the present government had no share? Perhaps some who might wish well to the present establishment did co-operate, nay, I do not know but they were the first movers of that spirit; but it cannot be supposed that the spirit then raised should have grown up to such a ferment, merely from a proposition which was honestly and fairly laid before the parliament, and left entirely to their determination! No, the spirit was, perhaps, begun by those who are truly friends to the illustrious family we have now upon the throne; but it was raised to a much greater height than, I believe, even they designed, by Jacobites, and such as are enemies to our present establishment, who thought they never had a fairer opportunity

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portunity of bringing about what they have so long and so unsuccessfully wished for, than that which had been furnished them by those who first raised that spirit. I hope the people have now in a great measure come to themselves, and therefore I doubt not but the next elections will shew, that when they are left to judge coolly, they can distinguish between the real and the pretended friends to the government. But I must say, if the ferment then raised in the nation had not already greatly subsided, I should have thought a new election a very dangerous experiment; and as such ferments may hereafter often happen, I must think that frequent elections will always be dangerous; for which reason, in so far as I can see at present, I shall, I believe, at all times think it a very dangerous experiment to repeal the septennial bill."

It is impossible at this distance of time to appreciate exactly the effect of the minister's speech; but a contemporary writer * asserts, that it was one of the best he ever made. The fate of these two speeches is singular: Sir William Wyndham, by his disrespectful allusions to the king, drew on himself a reproof, the justice of which neither himself or his friends have endeavoured to disprove. It was considered as an intemperate effusion, and did not lose the minister a single supporter in parliament, or a single adherent in the country; yet it has been carefully inserted by party writers, calling themselves historians, while that of the minister has been no less invidiously suppressed.

Walpole's speech, as far as it relates to that personality which seems to be the recommending characteristic of the other, has certainly less claim to be recorded, because the character and situation of Bolingbroke, contrasted with his own, are less able to give permanence and publicity to invective. The faults of an ex-minister, or aspiring leader of a party, are less interesting, to the community, than those of the man who holds the reins of government. But the immediate result of Walpole's unpremeditated reply to this studied attack, was a sense of shame in the opposition Whigs, and of indignation in the principal Tories, which interrupted their cordial union. Several Whigs re-united themselves to the minister, and the leading Tories, ashamed of appearing the puppets of Bolingbroke, though they continued to thwart and oppose the measures of government, did not, of themselves, bring forward any new question during the remainder of the session.

Unpopularity
of Boling-
broke.

It may not perhaps be improper in this place to observe, that the sensation which Walpole's speech made in the house of commons, and the effect which it had out of doors, in developing the intrigues of Bolingbroke with the opposition in England, and of laying open his cabals with foreign courts and ministers, were the immediate cause, that he quitted this country, and re-

* Tindal.

tired.

tired to France. Pulteney, who saw and appreciated the fatal consequences of his unpopularity among the Whigs, to which party he himself was always cordially attached, bitterly complained that Sir William Wyndham received too implicitly the dictates of Bolingbroke. With a view therefore to remove this stigma from opposition, he recommended to him a temporary retirement from England. Bolingbroke was extremely mortified, that all his repeated professions of honour, virtue, and disinterestedness did not gain credit; he found himself reduced to the most wretched situation which an aspiring mind like his could suffer, that of being excluded from a share in the legislature, and heading a party in continued opposition, without the smallest hopes of ever being restored to his seat in the house of lords. In his letters to Sir William Wyndham, he feelingly describes his own situation, "I am still," he says, "the same proscribed man, surrounded with difficulties, exposed to mortifications, and unable to take any share in the service, but that which I have taken hitherto, and which, I think, you would not persuade me to take in the present state of things. My part is over, and he who remains on the stage after his part is over, deserves to be hissed off*."

In consequence of these sentiments, he waited until the meeting of the new parliament, when a large majority still supporting the minister, during whose continuance in power he had no chance of obtaining a complete restoration, he followed the advice of Pulteney, and retired in disgust to France.

Retires to
France.

The adversaries of the minister had taken advantage of the inflamed state of the public mind, to circulate reports, both in their speeches and writings, that the liberties of the subject were in danger, and that he had planned a regular system of oppression, which, if not resisted, would erect a despotic and arbitrary power on the ruins of the British constitution.

The speech which Walpole composed for the king, on the dissolution of the parliament, was calculated, in the existing circumstances, to counteract these reports, and to conciliate the public. It was full of sentiments which none but a free nation could understand and appreciate; sentiments which do honour to the minister who composed it, to the king who uttered it, to the parliament who heard it, and to the people who applauded it.

Speech on the
dissolution of
parliament.

"The prosperity and glory of my reign depend upon the affections and happiness of my people, and the happiness of my people upon my preserving to them all the legal rights and privileges, as established under the present settlement of the crown in the Protestant line. A due execution and strict observance of the laws, are the best and only security both to sovereign and subject: their interest is mutual and inseparable, and therefore their en-

April 16th.

* Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham, Paris, November 29, 1735.—Correspondence, Period III. Article Bolingbroke.

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deavours for the support of each other ought to be equal and reciprocal. Any infringement or encroachment upon the rights of either is a diminution of the strength of both, which, kept within their due bounds and limits, make that just balance, which is necessary for the honour and dignity of the crown, and for the protection and prosperity of the people. What depends upon me, shall, on my part, be religiously kept and observed, and I make no doubt of receiving the just returns of duty and gratitude from them *."

CHAPTER THE FORTY-THIRD:

1733—1734.

View of Foreign Transactions from the Death of Augustus the Second to the Dissolution of Parliament.—Successful Hostilities of France, Spain, and Sardinia against the Emperor.—Neutrality of the Dutch.—Causes which induced England to reject the Application of the Emperor for Succours.

IF any man ever deserved the appellation of minister of peace, that man was Sir Robert Walpole. The foreign transactions of this eventful period will sufficiently verify that assertion. Yet it cannot be denied, that peace itself may be dearly purchased by the dereliction of national honour, by the breach of treaties, by permitting the loss of dominions to those whom it is our interest to support, and the aggrandisement of those whom it is our interest to depress. And it must be confessed, that if any censure can be justly thrown on the pacific system adopted by Walpole, it must be thrown on the inactivity of England at this critical juncture; in her refusal to assist the Emperor, against the united arms of France, Spain, and Sardinia; in suffering the Spanish branch of the house of Bourbon to wrest from the house of Austria Naples and Sicily; and, what was still more hostile to the interests of Great Britain, in permitting the accession of Loraine and Bar to France. For if it be allowed, that any merit is due for preserving this country and Europe from a general war, that merit is due to Walpole; so on the other hand, it cannot be denied, that if any blame can be imputed to the cabinet for tameness and pusillanimity, that blame must also attach solely to him; as he alone stood forth in opposition to the king and part of the cabinet, and by refusing to assist the Emperor, maintained his country in peace.

I shall confine myself at present to a brief deduction of the facts and

* Chandler, vol. 8. p. 248. Journals.

negotiations which preceded and followed the death of Augustus the Second, interspersed with such observations as may tend to elucidate his conduct, and display the motives that induced the minister of finance to abstain from entering into offensive operations against France, and to suffer the aggrandisement of the house of Bourbon, and the depression of the house of Austria; which proved afterwards so fatal to the interest of England, and of which we now experience the evil effects. In making this deduction, it is not my intention either to censure or to commend, but simply to state the sum and substance of the motives, which the papers in my possession have enabled me to assign for his conduct.

Chapter 43.

1733 to 1734.

For a term of twenty years, Europe had enjoyed an unexampled state of tranquillity, only broken by the petty hostilities between Spain and England in 1718 and 1727. This tranquillity had been owing to the temporary separation between France and Spain, to the reciprocal interests of France and England in the maintenance of peace, and to the good intelligence between the two cabinets.

Pacific state
of Europe.

But the reconciliation between France and Spain, and the re-union of England and Austria, by the treaty of Vienna, had scarcely taken place, before the jealousies between the two nations began to revive; their counsels were no longer guided by the same mutual good will and harmony. The efforts to give a king to Poland, on the death of Augustus the Second, the indignation of Elizabeth Farnese against the Emperor; for having deceived her in not accomplishing the marriage between her son, Don Carlos, and an archduchess, and the disputes which arose concerning the succession of Tuscany and Parma, kindled a war between the houses of Austria and Bourbon, which would have become general, had not Walpole prevented the diffusion of hostilities.

February 1.

The death * of Augustus the Second had no sooner been announced, than Louis the Fifteenth determined to support the claims of his father-in-law to the crown of Poland, in defiance of the Emperor and Russia, who favoured the elector of Saxony, son of the deceased monarch. He declared to all the foreign ambassadors, that he would not suffer any power to oppose the freedom of election in Poland. This declaration implied, that he expected no opposition to be made to the election of Stanislaus, because the influence of France

Consequences of the
death of Augustus the
Second.Conduct of
France:

* The substance of this chapter is taken from the dispatches of Horace Walpole, lord Harrington, the duke of Newcastle, and Thomas Robinson; Walpole, Orford, and Grantham Papers. Also from several papers drawn up by Horace Walpole, particularly, "Reflections on the present state of affairs, October 8, 1733."—"Conduct of England, with re-

gard to what has passed in Poland, since the death of king Augustus, and the transactions in other parts relative thereto, extracted from the correspondence with his majesty's ministers in foreign parts," from February to November 1733. "Continuation of the Conduct, &c." from November 1733 to July 1734.

in

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Of England.

in Poland was so great, as to preclude the choice of any other candidate. And as Spain was prepared to act offensively against the Emperor, and the king of Sardinia was on the point of concluding an alliance with France and Spain, Walpole had a difficult and delicate part to act. He was no less anxious than the Emperor or Russia, to exclude Stanislaus; and yet he was unwilling to offend France, by taking an open and active share in his exclusion. He was no less zealous to promote the election of Augustus, in return for his guaranty of the pragmatic sanction. But as he was determined to decline entering into a war, if it could be declined with honour, his conduct evinced the most consummate address and prudence.

Although the assurances to second the pretensions of the elector, and to exclude Stanislaus, were as strong as words could express; yet every declaration was avoided which seemed to imply, in the most distant degree, the co-operation of force. To the Czarina, who announced her inclination to unite with the king and the Emperor in filling the vacancy, and hoped that the choice would not fall on Stanislaus, or any French prince, it was replied, that the king would use his endeavours for the election of an unexceptionable person, and would second the Czarina's disposition to secure the public tranquillity.

To the Emperor, who declared his resolution to support the freedom of election, according to the constitution of Poland, which expressions were construed as meaning an exclusion of Stanislaus, and who requested that the English minister at Warsaw might act in concert with him, Russia, and Prussia, every assurance was given, that the king of England approved the resolution of promoting a new and free election in favour of an unexceptionable prince, and would forward the same design, as far as could be done by good offices. It was also urged that Mr. Woodward, the minister at Dresden, should contribute as much as possible to the same views; and if any complaint should be afterwards made, that he had acted less warmly than might be expected against Stanislaus, he was to alledge, as an excuse, the unwillingness of the king to give such an offence to France, without advantage to himself or his allies, and the small influence the king could expect to have in the affairs of that distant kingdom.

At the same time the king ordered his minister at Warsaw to give the strongest assurances of his affection and friendship towards that republic. He was to declare upon all occasions, in the king's name, for a free election, in favour of any prince, who was not displeasing to the neighbouring powers, and in whom the Poles might find a security for their liberties. He was to act in concert with the ministers of the Emperor and the Czarina, and assist them in obtaining the election of Augustus; but he was to act with the utmost discretion

discretion and moderation, not to join in giving the exclusion to any person, except the Pretender or his children. He was to oppose Stanislaus, but not in such a manner as might give offence, though he need not conceal his wishes in favour of the party espoused by the Emperor and his allies. If any encouragement was given to the Pretender, he was to protest against it, and leave the kingdom.

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The British cabinet carried their caution on this occasion to the highest degree of delicacy. The Imperial ministers delivered to Mr. Robinson * a paper, importing, that France appearing determined to break the peace, a rupture might be prevented by a strict union between the Emperor and his allies. For this reason the Emperor desired to concert measures with England and the United Provinces, either for deterring France, or for repelling hostilities. The Emperor, it was urged, had amply provided Luxemburg, but the remaining part of the Netherlands should be jointly secured, and the empire protected. The concurrence of the king of England was expected, because he had *approved* all the measures and sentiments adopted by the Imperial court, in regard to the Polish election. In reply to these insinuations, Mr. Robinson was ordered to observe, that this expression might be understood as if the king had actually *approved* the exclusion of Stanislaus by force, that such an insinuation ought not to pass unnoticed, because it was directly contrary to the most positive assurances, which had been transmitted from England to the British minister at Vienna; that the king was so far from having approved any design to commit hostilities in Poland, that he never could believe the Emperor had entertained such a design, and that he had always declared for a free election. The truth of this statement was acknowledged by the court of Vienna; and Mr. Robinson was again directed to dissuade them from pursuing such measures as might cause disturbances in Europe. These strong and repeated remonstrances finally prevailed on the Emperor, not openly to employ force, but to leave that part to the Czarina. July 24.

In conformity to the same principle, the British ministers at Warsaw and Vienna expressed the disapprobation of the king, that the Imperial minister at Warsaw accompanied the Russian ambassador when he notified the resolution of the Czarina to exclude Stanislaus by force, and when the Emperor was solicitous to engage England in a treaty of mutual defence with Russia, the answer of the king implied, that he was ready to conclude a treaty of friendship with the Czarina, but would not agree that it should contain defensive stipulations, or engagements to assist her, if she should be attacked in Europe on account of the transactions of Poland.

* July 15, Walpole Papers.

During

Period V.

1730 to 1734.

Election of
Stanislaus.

April.

Counter-
election of
Augustus.France,
Spain, and
Sardinia, de-
clare war
against the
Emperor.Their suc-
cessful opera-
tions.The Empe-
ror claims the
assistance of
England.

Nov. 1734.

During these transactions, the election took place in Poland. The French party so far prevailed in favour of Stanislaus, who in 1710 had been declared for ever incapable of being elected king of Poland, that a majority of the diet of convocation entered into a confederation to choose no one but a native, born of Roman Catholick parents, who possessed no sovereignty out of Poland, and was not supported by any foreign troops beyond the frontiers. In consequence of this resolution, which was declaring in his favour, Stanislaus secretly passed into Poland, made his appearance at Warsaw, and was chosen by the diet of election, which assembled on the 12th of September. Against this election, the Saxon party came forward, supported by a Russian army which entered Warsaw without resistance. The adherents of Stanislaus were dispersed, he himself fled to Dantzic, and the partisans of Augustus assembled at Wola, near Prague, the suburbs of Warsaw, and proclaimed him king of Poland.

The indignation of Louis the Fifteenth, was not appeased by the professions of the Emperor, that he had not acted offensively against Stanislaus, because he had sent no troops into Poland; but arguing that the co-operation of his minister at Warsaw with the Russian and Saxon ministers, and the assembling of 6,000 men on the frontiers of Poland, were the same as if he had openly employed force, declared war against him, in conjunction with Spain and Sardinia.

The declaration of war on the part of the three allied powers, was followed by instant hostilities. The French army, under Marshal Berwick, took the fort of Kehl, and invaded Germany; another corps, under the count of Belle Isle, overran Lorraine.

The Emperor, in a memorial delivered by Count Kinski, his ambassador in London, claimed the succours stipulated by the last treaty of Vienna, and claimed them in a manner which shewed his conviction, that England could not in justice refuse them. In fact, he had many reasons to suppose that he should obtain the required assistance. For notwithstanding the precautions which the English cabinet had taken to dissuade the Emperor from using force in Poland, they at the same time secretly employed every effort to obtain the exclusion of Stanislaus, the validity of whose election the English minister at Warsaw refused to acknowledge. They had been highly instrumental in promoting the conclusion of the alliance between the Emperor and Augustus, by which the Emperor, in return for the guaranty of the pragmatic sanction, promised assistance to procure his free nomination to the throne of Poland, in opposition to the partisans of Stanislaus, and to support him, if chosen, by force of arms.

The

The king was decidedly in favour of assisting the Emperor; the queen, though desirous of upholding the pacific system of Walpole, did not venture to oppose his wishes; and lord Harrington, who, as secretary of state, principally conducted the negotiation with the court of Vienna, was inclined to the same opinion.

Chapter 43.
1733 to 1734.
Delicate situation of Walpole.

In this crisis of affairs, Walpole stood in a very delicate situation, and was reduced to a disagreeable alternative. On one side, he was to oppose the earnest wishes of the king, to act in contradiction to the sentiments of part of the cabinet, and at the same time to appear as if he was abetting the degradation of the house of Austria, and promoting the aggrandisement of the house of Bourbon. On the other side, he was to plunge the nation into a war for the ostensible purpose of giving a king to Poland, in which England had no immediate concern, in opposition, perhaps, to the public opinion, and at the eve of a general election. But as he had for some time foreseen that he should be reduced to follow one of these disagreeable alternatives, he had previously collected all the information necessary to regulate his decision, and to enable him to pursue that conduct which seemed liable to the fewest inconveniences.

The Emperor had been repeatedly exhorted to put the Austrian Netherlands in a state of defence; from a certain apprehension, that unless that was effected, the barrier would be exposed, and the Dutch so alarmed, from the danger of being overrun by the French, that they would never have the spirit to act with vigour, in co-operation with England. But instead of hearkening to these just remonstrances, Luxemburg was alone provided with the necessary means of defence; the fortifications in the other parts were left in a most defenceless state, and the care of them consigned to the English and Dutch; a care which, the greffier Fagell observed, in a letter to Bruyninx, "The Dutch, not yet recovered from the expences of the late war, *could not*, and the English *would not* take upon themselves."

Improvidence of the Emperor.

The Emperor had also been repeatedly exhorted to conclude a defensive alliance with the king of Sardinia, who was strongly inclined to prefer his friendship to that of France and Spain; and his co-operation, which, instead of opening to the French the key of Italy, would have excluded them from that country, might have been obtained by trifling sacrifices. But the Emperor had, either from his usual dilatoriness, or from an unwillingness to cede any portion of the Milanese, declined engaging on his side so important an ally, until it was too late; and Charles Emanuel * apolo-

* Walpole Papers. Letter from the King of Sardinia to George the Second, March, 1734. Correspondence.

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1730 to 1734.

State of the
United Pro-
vinces.

gized to the king of England, that he had been reluctantly compelled, for his own safety and interest, to close with the offers of France and Spain, because the Emperor had refused to comply with his terms. In consequence of this imprudent neglect, and a total inattention to the common means of defence, his Italian dominions were incapable of resisting the inroads of the combined powers.

The situation of the United Provinces did not afford the smallest prospect of inducing them to engage in offensive operations. The leading men were offended with the king of England, for having given the princess Anne in marriage to the prince of Orange, without previous notice, and were suspicious that he was attempting to revive the office of stadtholder. The dread of being exposed to a French invasion, should they take an active part in favour of the Emperor, was so great, that the states general were inclined to accept the offers of France to conclude a neutrality for the Austrian Netherlands, and to agree not to assist the Emperor, in consequence of any events which related to the Polish election. Repeated remonstrances had been ineffectually made from the British cabinet, against this precipitate measure.

Mission of
Horace Wal-
pole to the
Hague.

April 18,
1734.

At length Walpole, anxious to obtain the co-operation of a power, without whom England could not venture to act, sent his brother Horace * to the Hague, though not in an official capacity, for the purpose of conciliating the leading men, over whom he had great influence, and of persuading the states general to adopt a more manly and decisive conduct. On his arrival at the Hague, he found things in a very indifferent situation; the people in general were much dissatisfied, not only with the conduct of the court of Vienna, but with that of England, upon a mistaken notion, that the king was labouring, out of partiality to the Emperor, to force them into the present war, and was endeavouring to promote the interests of the prince of Orange, at the expence of the Dutch constitution.

The news of the mission of the minister's brother had an instantaneous effect in raising the hopes of the Imperial court †, and gave a convincing proof that the cabinet of London were serious in their wishes to assist the Emperor, if it could be done without endangering the security of England. It however had no other consequences than to restore the confidence between the two nations, and to conciliate the leading men in Holland. For the Dutch were so dispirited with the defenceless state of the Netherlands, so disgusted with the conduct of the Emperor, and so averse to resume the

* Horace Walpole's Apology and Dispatches.

† Mr. Robinson to Lord Harrington, May 11th 1733. Grantham Papers.

burthens of war, that he could not bring them to adopt vigorous measures, or to countenance the smallest hopes of joining in offensive operations *.

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The internal situation of England was no less unfavourable to an immediate breach with France; a long period of peace and tranquillity had increased commerce, agriculture, and the resources of the country. The landed proprietors were highly satisfied with the diminution of the land tax, the monied men were no less pleased with deferring the payment of the national debt, the Jacobites were daily decreasing; the Tories, though personally hostile to the minister himself, began to experience the comforts of good order, derived from a settled government. Confidence in government had taken place of distrust; and the state of the country, both at home and abroad, exhibited the strongest symptoms of stability and credit. Walpole saw and appreciated these happy effects, derived from external peace and internal tranquillity; he was unwilling to risk the unpopularity of imposing new burthens; he was well aware that a war with France would renew the hopes and excite the efforts of the fallen party, and realise his constant prediction, that the crown of England would be fought for on British ground.

State of England.

The result which he drew from this combination of circumstances and events was, that it would be highly imprudent to involve the country in hostilities, without the co-operation of Holland. He was fully convinced that the nation would not readily approve a war for a Polish election; and that parliament would not be inclined to grant sufficient supplies for so chimerical and distant a project.

He did not think it prudent, however, to oppose at once the decided opinion of the king, who was eager for a war. He insinuated the necessity of temporising, till a new parliament was chosen, and the nation could be roused to a sense of the danger which would arise from the aggrandisement of the house of Bourbon, and until the people were made capable of judging, that the only foundation upon which the liberties of Europe could subsist, was the indivisibility of a power like the house of Austria, sufficient to be opposed to the house of Bourbon †.

Prudence of Walpole.

It was not however without great difficulty that he obtained the consent of the king and cabinet to adopt a line of conduct, which appeared no less pusillanimous in itself, than opposite to the tenour of the last treaty concluded at Vienna. But he gained his point by firmness and perseverance; by inculcating the necessity of mature deliberation, and of avoiding extremities

* Journal of Horace Walpole. Walpole Papers.

† Mr. Robinson to Mr. Pelham, Vienna, November 11, 1733. Grantham Papers.

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1730 to 1734.

Answer to
the Emperor.

till it should appear that the measures were no less practicable than advantageous; and he considered it prudent to feel the pulse of public opinion, which ought always to be consulted in cases of such extreme importance as a declaration of war.

In consequence of this determination, an answer was returned to the request of succours, made by the Imperial court, importing, that the king was concerned to see the peace broken, and the Emperor attacked; that he had hitherto employed his best offices, though unsuccessfully, to prevent the rupture, and would now use all possible means to accommodate matters. That the motives hitherto alledged for the commission of hostilities, being founded upon Polish affairs, in which the king had taken no part, but that of using his good offices, it was far from being clear, that he was obliged, purely upon that account, to enter into the quarrel. That as to the demand of succours, the king, though always ready to execute his engagements, and shew his particular friendship for the Emperor, must yet be satisfied that the demand was founded on positive engagements, before he involved his people in a war. That, therefore, he must carefully examine the allegations on both sides, and consult his allies, particularly the States General, and put himself in such a posture, as might enable him to provide effectually for his own security, and for the execution of his engagements.

Artful policy
of the Em-
peror.

The Emperor, highly indignant at the backwardness of the cabinet, projected an expedient which seemed calculated to forward the accomplishment of his views. Well knowing the aversion of England to the marriage between an archduchess and a prince of the house of Bourbon, and the remonstrances which had been made to him on that subject, not only during the time when he was at variance with England, but even lately by Mr. Robinson, in the strongest manner, on the mere rumour that such a measure was in agitation; he affected to open a negotiation with Spain, to renew the proposal of a marriage between his second daughter and Don Carlos.

On the arrival of a courier from Vienna*, count Kinski painted in the strongest colours to the king, the great uneasiness and danger of the Emperor's situation; his inability to resist singly the united arms of France, Spain, and Sardinia, and at the same time the little dependance to be placed upon the king of Prussia. He stated the unpromising conduct of several other princes of the empire, and the neutrality already accepted by some of them, together with the strong indications of a resolution and concert among several, even of the electors, to prevent the empire itself from taking any

* Continuation of the conduct of England, &c. January 1734. Walpole Papers.

part; and lastly, the despair of assistance from the States General. He concluded these representations with insisting absolutely, in the Emperor's name, that the king should no longer defer explaining his intention as to the part he would take, but should immediately give a positive promise to come, the very next campaign, to his assistance; without which promise, he insinuated, that the Emperor must comply with the demands of Spain, in giving his second daughter in marriage to Don Carlos, as a means still in his power, and the only one in that case remaining, for extricating himself and his family from their present difficulties, and the ill consequences so justly to be apprehended from them, even to the destruction of the house of Austria, and of the equilibrium in Europe.

This artful expedient, however, did not succeed. Walpole had not been so much alarmed on a former occasion, at the rumour of such a marriage, as lord Townshend and the other ministers, and he now conceived that matters were considerably changed. He conjectured that the Emperor only threw out this insinuation, with a view to alarm England, rather than with a determination to adopt the measure; and he was of opinion, that even if the Emperor should be in earnest, provided the eldest of the archduchesses was affianced to the duke of Lorraine, the marriage of the second with Don Carlos would not be productive of great disadvantages. In all events, to use his own expressions, "Circumstances change; things distant and uncertain must yield to present and certain dangers *."

In conformity with these sentiments, orders were immediately dispatched to Mr. Robinson, to explain to the Imperial court, the several reasons which made it absolutely impossible for the king, even though it should have appeared to him that the Emperor's claim of succours was well founded, to come so soon as was expected to his assistance. He was at the same time to declare, that the king no longer continued to oppose the marriage of the second archduchess with Don Carlos, it being represented to him to be the only means left for retrieving the Emperor's affairs, by detaching Spain from France. Mr. Robinson was, however, to insist, that nothing should be concluded in this affair, without the king's intervention, and that due precautions should be taken for preventing the dangers that might be apprehended to the liberties of Europe from such an alliance; amongst which, he was to insinuate, that the marrying of the eldest archduchess

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1734.

Defeated by
Walpole.

* Among the Orford Papers, I find some reflections on this subject, written by Sir Robert Walpole. They are without date or sig-

nature, but they were undoubtedly made at this period. See Correspondence.

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1730 to 1734.

The king
offers his
mediation.

Indignation
of the Em-
peror.

Meeting of
parliament.

to the duke of Loraine, under the guaranty of Spain, was looked upon as one of the most effectual securities.

About the same time, finding the Dutch utterly averse to encounter the burthens and dangers of a war, and anxious to prevent them from throwing themselves into the arms of France, the minister enforced the absolute necessity of acceding to the neutrality, in compliance with their earnest wishes. The king exhorted the Emperor to acquiesce in the neutrality for the Netherlands, and offered his mediation, in conjunction with the States General, to bring about an accommodation, and to restore peace.

The declaration in favour of the marriage, which was supposed to be so contrary to the wishes of the English cabinet, and the offer of good offices only instead of effectual succours, so highly irritated the Emperor, that his answer to both these propositions, contained no less haughtiness and spirit, than if the affairs of the house of Austria had been in the most prosperous situation.

The declaration concerning the marriage, made a similar impression on all the imperial ministers. They treated the supposition, that the Emperor had ever entertained the least thought of marrying his second daughter to the duke of Parma, as injurious. They even affected to doubt that Kinski had ever spoken in the manner imputed to him. And in the answer which was delivered by the Emperor's order to Mr. Robinson, upon the 18th of February, the Emperor declared, in the most solemn terms, that he never had any thoughts, nor ever would condescend to purchase peace on those terms, and formally disavowed Kinski, and all others who might ever have given the least hint of that kind, declaring his determined resolution to defend himself to the last extremity.

In answer to the offer of good offices, the Emperor peremptorily rejected the proposal of a neutrality for the Netherlands; declared his firm resolution of supporting his cause by force of arms, and so far from temporising, he threatened the Dutch to remove the war into Flanders, by attacking France on the side of Luxemburgh.

With a view of rendering the interposition of England more effectual, and giving weight to the proposal of good offices, Walpole had recourse to his usual method of preventive measures, and adopted the resolution of putting the country in a respectable posture of defence, tempering caution with spirit, and deliberation with energy. The speech from the throne, on the opening of the session, corresponded with these principles. After recommending the utmost prudence and precaution, and exhorting parliament to weigh and consider circumstances thoroughly, before a final determination

termination was taken, to act in concert with the States General, and to avoid precipitate declarations; the king added, "In the mean time, I am persuaded you will make such provisions as shall secure my kingdoms, rights, and possessions from all dangers and insults, and maintain the respect due to the British nation: whatever part it may in the end be most reasonable for us to act, it will, in all views, be necessary, when all Europe is preparing for arms, to put ourselves in a proper posture of defence. As this will best preserve the peace of the kingdom, so it will give us a due weight and influence in whatever measures we shall take in conjunction with our allies. But should the defence of the nation not be sufficiently provided for, it will make us disregarded abroad, and may prove a temptation and encouragement to the desperate views of those, who never fail to flatter themselves with the hopes of great advantages from public troubles and disorders *."

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• Journals. Chandler.

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PERIOD THE SIXTH:

From the Dissolution of Parliament, to the Death of Queen
CAROLINE.

1734—1737.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FOURTH:

1734—1735.

Successful Operations of the Allies.—Embassy of Horace Walpole to the Hague.—Indignation of the Emperor, and his Attempts to remove Walpole.—Origin, Progress, and Termination of the Secret Convention.—Renewal of Hostilities.—Fluctuating State of the British Cabinet.—Embarrassments and Firmness of Walpole.

Success of
the allies.

May 5.

THE Emperor exposed, without the assistance of a single ally, to the united arms of France, Spain, and Sardinia, was reduced to a most disastrous situation. The Milanese was wholly subdued by the allied forces; the victory of Bitonto secured to Don Carlos the conquest of Naples and Sicily; and Mantua, the only possession which remained to the Emperor in Italy, was threatened with a siege, and unable to hold out for any length of time. In Germany, the Imperial forces, though commanded by Eugene, were too inferior to resist the operations of the French; the capture of Treves, Traerbach, and

and Philipsburgh, opened to the French the entrance into the Empire, and Eugene was compelled to act on the defensive.

This disastrous situation of the Austrian affairs, alarmed the British cabinet, and though the minister was firmly resolved to avoid hostilities, yet he saw the immediate necessity of augmenting the forces, both in England and Holland, and to be at all events prepared for war.

The great object was, to secure the concurrence of the United Provinces, and to prevail on them to act in concert with England, that the mediation of the two maritime powers might be accepted by the Emperor, and respected by France and her allies.

In order to obtain the co-operation of Holland, Horace Walpole had been again dispatched to the Hague, with the character of ambassador extraordinary, and had warmly pressed the States General to augment their forces; and although his representations had not been attended with due effect, yet he had considerably removed the jealousy and disagreement which had recently arisen between the two maritime powers, and gave hopes that his attempts might prove successful.

While these transactions were passing between the king and the Republic, under the promise of inviolable secrecy on both sides, frequent memorials were presented by count Kinski, calling upon the king in the strongest manner, to fulfil his engagements towards the Emperor, by sending instantly the most effectual succours.

Although no specific answer could be returned whilst the negotiation at the Hague was depending, yet previous intimations had been given to the Imperial court, that no immediate assistance could be expected from England in the present situation of affairs.

But as soon as the negotiation was brought to a conclusion, and it was determined to make the offer of their joint mediation and good offices for an accommodation of the differences, lord Harrington gave to count Kinski, an account of this resolution; and orders were transmitted to their ministers at Paris and Madrid, to propose a general pacification through the mediation of the maritime powers: The Emperor received the notification communicated by Mr. Robinson, with no less surprise than indignation, and his minister delivered in a strong and pointed memorial. In this paper, the Emperor insisted on the rectitude of his own conduct and views, the insincerity of France, and the wanton aggressions of the allies; claimed from the maritime powers effectual co-operation to insure the guaranties stipulated by existing treaties, previous to his acceptance of their proposed mediation, and

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added,

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Preparations
in England.

Embassy of
Horace
Walpole to
the Hague.

July 27,
1734.

Remon-
strances of
the Emperor.

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His indignation
against
Walpole :

added, he would never have acted as they had, and after a delay of nine months, offered his mediation instead of sending assistance *.

While the answer to this memorial was preparing in concert with the States General, the Emperor became indignant at the delay, and imputing the denial of succours to the influence of Sir Robert Walpole, broke out into the most intemperate expressions against him. Totally unacquainted with the first principles of the English constitution, and forming, from the accounts transmitted by count Kinski, wrong notions of the king's power, and of the state of parties, knowing that George the Second was personally eager for the war, he entertained the most sanguine hopes that the nation would be brought over to his opinion.

Under these impressions, he revived the chimerical plan which he had ineffectually adopted in 1726, of appealing to the nation against the minister. His ambassador in London caballed with opposition; endeavoured to excite the sympathy of the nation; threw the blame of his depression on Sir Robert Walpole; appealed to the king's feelings, and to his inveterate hatred of the house of Bourbon, and endeavoured, by means of the Empress, to interest queen Caroline in his favour.

These imprudent attempts did not escape the knowledge of Walpole. An intercepted letter from the Emperor to count Kinski, fully developed the plan in agitation, and displayed the threats which Charles the Sixth was weak enough to suppose would alarm the minister, and compel him to act offensively against France.

Attempts to
effect his re-
moval.

He even carried his resentment so far, that he attempted to obtain the removal of Walpole, by means of a meddling emissary, who was ill calculated to succeed in so difficult an enterprise.

Character
and cabals of
the bishop of
Namur :

This emissary was Strickland, bishop of Namur, by birth an Englishman, and by religion a Roman catholic. He had been warmly attached to the cause of the Pretender, and having sacrificed his country to his principles, had been promoted to the Abbey of Saint Pierre de Preaux, in Normandy. He had, in the latter end of the reign of George the First, maintained a correspondence with the opposition; and had through their interest with the Emperor, been raised to the bishopric of Namur; he afterwards became a spy to the English ministry, and rendered himself so useful, that he was considered as a proper person of confidence to reside at Rome, for the purpose of giving information with regard to the Pretender. With this view, lord

* Reponse de la cour Imperiale aux representations de Messrs. Robinson et Bruininx, 30 Juin, 1734. Walpole Papers.

Harrington * applied to the Emperor for his interest to obtain for him a cardinal's hat ; and Mr. Robinson was ordered to second that recommendation with his whole influence. The bishop being a man of an artful and intriguing turn, plausible in his manner, and having gained great credit for his strict regularity and disinterestedness in the management of his diocese, was admitted to several audiences of the Empress, and succeeded so far in insinuating himself into her good graces, that he was employed to thwart the marriage of the eldest archduchess with Don Carlos, to which she had an insuperable aversion.

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1734 to 1735.

During these audiences, he artfully insinuated such remarks on the mismanagement of the Imperial ministry, as induced the Empress to obtain for him a private audience of the Emperor. He availed himself of this permission to present several memorials, for the amelioration of the domestic affairs, which were well received by the Emperor, fond of new schemes, and inclined to think unfavourably of his ministers. From these topics, he digressed to lord Harrington's recommendation, and represented himself as capable either of forcing the British administration to enter into the war, or if that failed of success, of driving out Sir Robert Walpole, through the intrigues of the opposition. The Emperor weakly acceded to this proposal, and supplied the bishop of Namur with private credentials to the king and queen of England. On his departure, he was instructed to take advantage of the decided inclination of the king to enter into the war, of the apparent lukewarmness of the queen to support the pacific system, and of the disunion of sentiments in the ministry.

The bishop of Namur was received by the king and queen in so gracious a manner, as to give umbrage to Sir Robert Walpole. He had a long and secret conference with lord Harrington † ; and reports were soon in circulation, that he would draw the nation into a war, and that he was privately supported by the king and queen, and abetted by lord Harrington ; and that the fall of the minister would be the immediate consequence.

It became necessary to discredit these rumours. Horace Walpole hinted to lord Harrington his opinion of the bishop, and the ill policy of appearing to countenance so dangerous a person. In the private correspondence which he held with queen Caroline ‡, he also artfully represented the impropriety

Counteracted
by Walpole.

* Walpole and Grantham Papers. Mr. Robinson to lord Harrington, September 8. To Horace Walpole, November 13, 1734. Correspondence.

† Orford Papers. Correspondence.
‡ Orford Papers. Letter to queen Caroline, October 18-29, 1734. Correspondence.

Period VI. of giving such a reception to a missionary who was so favourable to the
 1734 to 1737. opposition; he urged the necessity of not suffering a person of his suspicious character to remain in England; and insinuated that the Emperor should be undeceived in his notion, that the king was of a different opinion from the ministry, and be positively informed that England could not take a part in the war. Walpole, in concert with his brother, supported this measure, and suggested to the queen, that she should herself write to the Empress *, to contradict the false accounts sent by Kinski and the bishop of Namur, and candidly to declare that no succours could be given by England, until the offer of the mediation had been rejected. The minister carried his point; the bishop of Namur was civilly dismissed; the king was either convinced of the necessity of adopting pacific measures, or yielded reluctantly to a plan which he could not venture to oppose. Lord Harrington submitted to the superior influence of Walpole; and the Emperor, with some hesitation, agreed to admit the good offices, and to accept the mediation of the maritime powers.

Meanwhile, a secret negotiation was suddenly opened with France, which seemed at first to afford a prospect of a speedy accommodation, and on that account was eagerly embraced by Sir Robert Walpole, but which involved both him and his brother in considerable embarrassments, excited, in the course of its progress, the displeasure of the king, and occasioned a temporary disagreement among the ministers.

Intimacy of
Horace
Walpole
with baron
Gedda.

Horace Walpole maintained an intimate correspondence with baron Gedda, the Swedish minister at Paris, for whom he procured an annual pension of £. 400; and as Gedda was on good terms with cardinal Fleury, and had communicated the private sentiments of the French minister, Horace Walpole had, at the suggestion of his brother, found means to convey hints for a general accommodation.

Embarrassing
situation of
the cabinet.

The situation of the British cabinet was exceedingly embarrassing; being reproached on one side by the Emperor for not fulfilling the guaranty by declaring war, and on the other by France, for not being cordially disposed to favour a peace, it became expedient to take a decided part. But the co-operation of the United Provinces was considered by the minister as a necessary means to insure success.

The disposition of persons and affairs in Holland was so timid and fluctuating, as to afford little hope of terminating hostilities, unless France

* Correspondence.

could

could be induced, of her own accord, to open a negotiation. For it was sensibly urged * by the ambassador at the Hague, that although these conditions might not be such as would be accepted by the Emperor, yet if they were once proposed to him by England and the States General, he would be undeceived in his fond expectations, that those powers would enter into the war for the purpose of recovering his dominions in Italy, and be inclined to turn his attention to some expedient for an accommodation.

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With this view, Horace Walpole, with the private approbation of his brother, employed the intervention of his friend at Paris, and finally obtained the object so much desired. Baron Gedda acquainted him, that the cardinal, impressed with a desire to give peace to Europe, proposed to enter into a confidential correspondence with him, for the purpose of settling the preliminaries for a general pacification, to be communicated to no one but the Pensionary Slingelandt †. This overture being considered by a part of the cabinet as tending only to amuse, and as a snare employed by France to prevent the adoption of vigorous measures, was at first warmly opposed; but being supported by queen Caroline and Sir Robert Walpole, and those members of administration who adhered to their opinion, it was immediately accepted; a private correspondence took place, and the cardinal proposed to send a confidential person, by the name of Jannel, to the Hague, to settle and conclude the terms to which England or France would previously accede, before they were communicated on one side to the Emperor, and on the other to the allies of France.

Overtures of
cardinal
Fleury.

This proposition of cardinal Fleury being approved by the cabinet, an interesting correspondence took place between him and Horace Walpole, concerning the previous conditions to be settled for adjusting the preliminaries. The letters of the cardinal, and the answers of Horace Walpole, were transmitted to England for the approbation and direction of the king, and private accounts were regularly forwarded to Sir Robert Walpole.

Correspond-
ence with
Horace Wal-
pole.

During these transactions, Sir Robert Walpole bestowed extraordinary pains on foreign affairs. Besides holding a secret and constant correspondence with his brother, and suggesting, through his means, those sentiments with which he wished to impress the queen, he examined with peculiar attention the dispatches to and from the secretaries of state; took notes, and made references of the most important letters; and although he displeased

Application
and influence
of Walpole.

* Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, August 6, 1734. Correspondence.

† Horace Walpole to the queen. Walpole Papers.

the

Period VI. the king by his firmness in suggesting pacific measures, and in some in-
 1734 to 1737. stances was secretly thwarted by lord Harrington, who acted in deference
 to the views of his sovereign, yet he would not suffer any measure to be pur-
 sued without his approbation, and directed or controuled the whole series of
 this intricate negotiation.

Negotiation
 with Jannel
 at the Hague.

In consequence of this confidential intercourse, Jannel arrived at the Hague on the 5th of November; continued there only three days, and had three very important conferences with Horace Walpole and the Pensionary, with such secrecy, that his arrival was not suspected, until he had taken his departure. Of these three conferences, Horace Walpole transmitted an accurate and well written account to the British cabinet. An arrangement was taken towards settling the preliminaries, in which the two parties, after proposing terms which could not be acceded to on either side, afterwards gradually approached each other, and seemed to be not very distant from the probability of coming to an amicable agreement. The terms proposed by Jannel, and opposed or assented to by Horace Walpole, were to be referred on one side to the cardinal, and on the other to the British cabinet.

A plan for the preliminaries was now to be proposed by the cabinet, and forwarded to the Hague, for regulating the conduct of the ambassador.

Walpole en-
 forces pacific
 measures.

In order to engage England and Holland in the war, the Emperor had withdrawn all his troops from the barrier towns, and confined himself to the defence of Luxemburgh. He represented that it was more the interest of the maritime powers than his own, to preserve the Low Countries from France, and therefore he should leave to them the care of their defence. This resolution had been privately taken without the knowledge of Walpole, in concert with the king and lord Harrington, who were no less anxious than the Emperor to commence hostilities against France. In consequence of this resolution, a plan was drawn up by lord Harrington*, to be forwarded to Horace Walpole. It was worded in a most artful manner, and appeared to have no other design than to preserve the Low Countries from France. The ambassador was ordered to insinuate to the Dutch, that if they would authorise the king to assure the Emperor of their design to augment their forces, his majesty would endeavour to prevail on the Emperor to send, without delay, a sufficient number of men from the Rhine for the defence of the Low Countries; and that the king, at the requisition of the Dutch, ac-

* Lord Harrington to Horace Walpole, Whitehall, November 3^d, 1734. Correspondence.

cording

cording to the tenour of the barrier treaty, would supply 10,000 men, provided they would furnish an equal number. Chapter 44.
1734 to 1735.

This dispatch, before it was sent to the Hague, was forwarded by a messenger to Sir Robert Walpole, who was then at Houghton, for his approbation. The minister highly disapproved the measure, and thought it necessary to express his disapprobation in such strong terms, that lord Harrington totally relinquished his design. In his answer to Walpole, he testified his concern that the draught which he proposed to write to Horace Walpole concerning the Netherlands, was so strongly condemned *. "The letter itself," he added, "is not sent."

Soon afterwards, lord Harrington drew up, by order of the king, a plan for the preliminaries, which was calculated to throw obstacles in the way of the negotiation with France, and to check the eagerness of Horace Walpole for immediately modifying and closing with the propositions of cardinal Fleury. These instructions were to be forwarded to the Hague, in a letter to the ambassador, by which he was to be implicitly guided in this delicate business †. He prepared this letter on the 12th of November, but as it was an affair of too great importance to be precipitately decided without the concurrence of the minister, who was then at Houghton, he dispatched a messenger with a letter, enclosing a copy, and requesting his opinion. This plan met with no less disapprobation than that which related to the Netherlands; and Walpole was never engaged in a more difficult or delicate part. Although he well knew that to disapprove or alter it, was in effect to act in direct contradiction to the sentiments and wishes of the king, yet he did not hesitate to adopt that resolution. He considered the plan as wholly formed by lord Harrington; and in a very frank and candid manner, gave his objections, without attempting in the smallest degree to conceal, or even to palliate his opinion. And perhaps in no instance were the integrity, prudence, and firmness of Walpole more evident, than in the answer which he returned to lord Harrington on this occasion ‡.

Firm and prudent conduct of Walpole.

In the middle of December, Jannet returned to the Hague, and the conferences were resumed. The consequence of these meetings was, a project of pacification concerted between England and the States, as conformable as possible to the sentiments and desires of France, as they were explained by the cardinal in his private correspondence with Horace Walpole and the

Secret convention.

* Sidney Papers. November 8th, 1734. Correspondence.

Sir Robert Walpole, November 13, 1734. Correspondence.

† Lord Harrington to Horace Walpole, November 12, 1734. Lord Harrington to

‡ Sir Robert Walpole to lord Harrington, November 14, 1734. Correspondence.

Period VI. Pensionary, and which ought to have been signed at the Hague by Jannel.
 1734 to 1737. But as the French ministers had protracted the negotiation, by raising new demands, and creating fresh difficulties, it was thought expedient to satisfy the expectation and impatience of Europe, by publishing the plan.

Accordingly, the king in his speech, which he delivered at the opening of the new parliament, observed, "that in a short time, a plan would be offered to the consideration of all the parties engaged in the present war, as a basis for a general negotiation of peace, in which the honour and interest of all parties had been consulted, as far as the circumstances of time, and the present posture of affairs, would permit *."

Insincerity of
Fleury.

The French ministers affected to be dissatisfied with this proceeding; they pretended that it was a breach of that secrecy which had been promised, and they remonstrated, that this hasty publication of the conditions for a general peace, would entirely frustrate the good intentions of France, by alarming the allies. At the same time, Jannel, instead of signing the project of the preliminaries, according to the repeated assurances of cardinal Fleury, received a new counter project, and fresh instructions, which the English and Dutch ministers at the Hague could not agree to, and from which he could not venture to recede. Thus this important negotiation, which had employed six months, and had been conducted with the greatest secrecy, was suddenly suspended. Jannel quitted the Hague, charged with expostulatory letters to the cardinal, on the unexpected miscarriage of this great work, which was expected to give peace to Europe; and on the following day, Horace Walpole set out for London, carrying with him the unsigned project of pacification, which had been concerted with the ministers of the Republic.

Articles of
the conven-
tion.

The principal articles of this project were, the abdication of Stanislaus, on the condition of retaining his title; the evacuation of Poland by the Russian troops; the cession of Naples and Sicily to Don Carlos, and of the Tortonese, Novorese, and Vigevenasco to the king of Sardinia. To the Emperor, the restoration of all the other conquests, the immediate possession of Parma and Placentia, and the succession of Tuscany, except Leghorn, which was to be created an independant republic; France to guaranty the pragmatic sanction; Spain and Sardinia to renew their guaranties. This plan to be considered as the basis of an immediate negotiation for a general peace, and an armistice to be strenuously recommended by the mediators.

* Journals. Chandler, vol. 9. p. 3.

The Emperor having testified his inclination to accept this plan, though he afterwards attempted to make some alterations which were inadmissible, it was presented in form to the respective ministers of the Emperor, France, Spain, and Sardinia. The earl of Waldegrave returned to Paris, with instructions to press the cardinal in the strongest manner to confirm and support this project, according to the most solemn assurances which he had given in his private correspondence with Horace Walpole. But his representations were not attended with any effect. The opinion of lord Harrington, which had been confirmed by the earl of Waldegrave in his former dispatches from Paris, that France was insincere in these overtures, and only intended to deceive the British cabinet, proved true, and Sir Robert Walpole was the dupe of his pacific inclinations.

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1734 to 1735.

The real cause of this failure was derived from the irresolution and inactivity of the Dutch, of which Chauvelin, who either governed or influenced the cardinal, availed himself, to prevent the conclusion of the secret convention with England.

Irresolution
of Holland.

"One of the fundamental principles of Chauvelin's politics," observes Horace Walpole, in a letter to lord Harrington, "was to separate, if possible, the States from England. The basis of all his measures when he entered into the war, was founded upon this principle; and his language and exertions have been from time to time more or less violent and haughty, in carrying it on, according to the appearance of a division or union between the king and the States; and by this same rule or compass, he has dexterity enough to steer the cardinal's pliant temper, or to adapt his own sentiments to the cardinal's, whenever he finds the old gentleman's vigour, from an apprehension of the maritime powers taking jointly a share in this war, begin to swerve and incline to peace."

Policy of
Chauvelin.
September 4.

In the present circumstances, Chauvelin well knew the Dutch could never be induced to enter into the war, as long as they had no apprehensions for the safety of the Netherlands; and although the Pensionary expressed, in a letter to the cardinal, his sentiments in strong and lively terms in favour of the project, with a view to support and add weight to the representations of Horace Walpole; yet the effect of his letter was fully counterbalanced by the report made by Fenelon, the French ambassador at the Hague, of the profound tranquillity in Holland, and of the determined resolution of the Dutch not to engage in hostilities.

The British cabinet now roused itself from its pacific lethargy, and Walpole himself was foremost in recommending and enforcing the necessity of making the most active exertions. Two motions, warmly supported by him,

Active pre-
parations in
England.

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were carried in the house of commons, though not without great opposition *, for taking 30,000 seamen and 26,000 soldiers into pay, in addition to 12,000 men in Ireland, and 6,000 Danes, according to the subsidiary treaty with Denmark.

While these augmentations were making with unusual vigour, it was determined to lay before the States General the strongest representations, for the purpose of stimulating them to similar exertions, though all hopes of effecting a general accommodation were not absolutely relinquished. Horace Walpole was directed to take Paris in his route to the Hague, to expostulate with the cardinal on his evasive conduct, and to induce him if possible to ratify the terms to which he had consented, and if he did not succeed in that effort, to endeavour at least to procure an armistice; and at all events to obtain the final sentiments of France, that at his return to the Hague, he might be able to concert proper measures with the States.

Horace Walpole expostulates with cardinal Fleury.

Horace Walpole pursued the object of his mission with no less spirit than address. In a long conference with the cardinal, he explained the motive and purport of his mission, recapitulated the rise, progress, and issue of the secret negotiation, obviated the principal objections which had been urged by the cardinal in his last letters, and supported each article of the project of pacification, which Jannet ought to have signed at the Hague; stated, in the strongest manner, the fatal consequences which might result from his refusal to fulfil his promise, and pressed him to a speedy consent to the plan and armistice. The cardinal, in reply, pleaded the impossibility of compliance, by reason of the general outcry of the French nation, council of state, and allies against the plan, as partial and dishonourable, and particularly represented the impropriety of the demand, that France should guaranty the pragmatic sanction without any advantage in return; and asserted that Tuscany, with Parma and Placentia, in addition to the Milanese, would render the Emperor more formidable in Italy than he was before the rupture: he also hinted at the danger of disobliging Spain, and of compelling her to conclude a separate accommodation with the Emperor.

To these objections, Horace Walpole answered with such address and force, and alarmed the cardinal so much, by declaring that the miscarriage of the negotiation would be followed by a general war, or a family alliance between the courts of Madrid and Vienna, that he brought him in appearance to approve an armistice, for setting on foot an immediate nego-

* 256 to 183, and 261 to 208. Chandler.

tiation,

tiation, and to promise to use his influence with the king of Sardinia, and by this means to force Spain to accede. He also expressed his willingness, that France and the maritime powers should sign a declaration, engaging to promote, by a secret and confidential concert, the conclusion of a peace, on the conditions regulated in the late correspondence. His approbation was even carried so far, that when Horace Walpole produced a project of a declaration, consonant to the cardinal's new propositions and wishes, he expressed his readiness to take it into consideration, and promised to exert his whole influence to bring the great work to a happy conclusion *.

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Yet notwithstanding these solemn assurances, he either had not power, or wanted inclination to fulfil his promise; he soon after observed, that the project laid before the king of France was deemed inadmissible, and that the article of the armistice, if ratified, would cover France with shame, and deprive her of all her allies.

It was now evident that the cardinal could no longer abide by his declarations of disinterestedness, and that he was endeavouring to suggest some artful means, by which he could contradict his own assertions, that France required nothing for herself. It was plain, though he did not venture to avow it, that Lorraine was the object of her wishes, and that as long as the allies continued to be successful against the Emperor, and England and Holland did not take an active and manly part, the strongest representations would have no effect. In vain therefore did Horace Walpole reproach the cardinal with the duplicity and weakness of his conduct; in vain he renewed his instances for a suspension of arms, and represented the fatal consequences which would probably result from his refusal; in vain he threatened to publish an account of the whole transaction, and expose him to the world.

The cardinal was abashed and confounded, but not in the least convinced, or moved to compliance. Although he affected earnestly to desire that a plan of pacification should be formed and ratified, yet he could not be induced to explain himself, either on the terms or the method, and delivered his sentiments in so confused and inarticulate a manner, that the British ambassador could collect nothing but vague promises, without any specific proposals. Horace Walpole accordingly departed from Paris, leaving the negotiation in the same state in which he found it on his arrival.

Lord Harrington in this instance spoke the unanimous language of the

Application
to the States
General:

* Horace Walpole's Dispatches to the duke of Newcastle, and to pensionary Slingelandt, April 4th and 6th, 1735. Walpole Papers.

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1734 to 1737.

British cabinet, when in his instructions to Horace Walpole *, he painted in the strongest terms, the king's concern and indignation at the cardinal's late conduct towards him and the States. He observed, that this conduct, whether the effect of artifice or irresolution, made it equally unwise and inexcusable to rely, without being at the same time well provided against all events, upon any future transaction with the cardinal, for bringing about a termination of the present troubles, which threatened to subvert the balance of Europe. He said, the time was now come, in which it was indispensably incumbent upon the maritime powers to defend the liberties of Europe ; and to lose no time in putting themselves into a condition to act with vigour, whenever they should find it necessary : He added, that the king hoped the States would immediately make the proper augmentation of their forces, as he had himself done, by sea and land, in order to disabuse France and her allies in their presumption upon the supineness of the republic, and to be in readiness to take such measures, in concert with England, as the preservation of their own, and the liberties of Europe might require.

Ineffectual.

In vain Horace Walpole strenuously exerted himself in pursuit of these instructions. The recollection of the haughty and unfriendly conduct of the Imperial court ; of the defection of England, at the peace of Utrecht, without securing a sufficient barrier to the States ; their jealousy of the prince of Orange, increased by his late marriage with the princess Anne ; a total disregard for the losses of the Emperor in Italy, which they did not consider as their immediate concern, and the security of the Low Countries, by the convention of neutrality concluded with France on the first appearance of a rupture, contributed to prevent the Dutch from taking any part in the war. These resolutions were fortified by the melancholy consideration of the exhausted and distressed state of the republic ; by an opinion, generally prevalent in Holland, of the cardinal's pacific disposition, and of the moderation of France ; and particularly by the apprehension of confirming the Emperor in his supposed aversion to peace, by any appearance of vigour. Accordingly the States, instead of taking an active part, renewed their instances to the respective powers, for a favourable answer to the plan of pacification.

Impediments
to the nego-
tiation.

The Emperor was unwilling to agree to the previous conditions, unless the maritime powers engaged, should these conditions not be accepted by the allies, to commence hostilities ; but they declined taking upon them this engagement, because they suspected that the Emperor would throw ob-

* Walpole Papers. Lord Harrington to Horace Walpole, 15th April 1735.

stacles in the way of the pacification, for the purpose of bringing on a general war, which was the great object of his wishes. The Emperor behaved peevishly to England, and presumptuously to the States, who were dissatisfied with him, and suspicious that England was acting in concert with him to their prejudice.

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The situation of affairs in Holland inspired cardinal Fleury with sufficient resolution to urge, in a private letter to Horace Walpole, a heavy accusation against him and the Pensionary, for having divulged the secret correspondence, and to justify himself in his refusal to comply with the conditions of the plan; and he added, that the publication of the plan had raised such indignation in the whole council, that he could not venture to avow or espouse it. The main view of this letter was to close the secret correspondence with Horace Walpole; to serve as a preliminary to the answer of the allies, who rejected the terms of pacification proposed by the maritime powers, and to justify another campaign, which was opened with redoubled exertion.

Hostilities renewed.

April 30.

Thus ended this important negotiation, in which cardinal Fleury, or rather Chauvelin, who governed the cardinal, deceived the British cabinet, lured the Dutch with the hopes of a pacification, and prevented them both from taking such vigorous measures as would have stopped the allies in the career of conquest.

Yet cardinal Fleury does not seem to deserve the reproaches for duplicity which were now lavished upon him. We are too apt to estimate the conduct of other nations, from what passes in our own, without duly considering the peculiar situation and circumstances of those with whom we are negotiating, and without knowing the real state of the public opinion, which every minister, even in the most despotic countries, is in some measure obliged to consult. The real truth seems to be, that the English cabinet expected terms from France which could not be complied with; that cardinal Fleury was probably sincere in his first overtures for peace, but was persuaded by the representations of Horace Walpole, who had gained great ascendancy over him during his embassy at Paris, to accede to conditions, which he could not afterwards venture to propose to the king and council of France. That on sober reflection, he conceived it highly dishonourable in Louis the Fifteenth to desert Stanislaus, in support of whom the war had been undertaken, merely to obtain the transfer of some dominions in Italy to Don Carlos and the king of Sardinia, without either effecting this object, taking vengeance on those who prevented it, or obtaining some acquisition which might serve as

Motives of
Fleury's conduct.

an

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1734 to 1737.

Objects of
the allies.

Fluctuating
state of the
English ca-
binet.

Displeasure
of the king.

an indemnity for the expences of the war, and justify to the people in France, the dereliction of the cause for which hostilities had been undertaken.

The object of Spain was to drive the Emperor from Italy; the king of Sardinia expected the whole Milanese; while France, under the mask of moderation and professions of disinterestedness, aimed at the acquisition of Lorraine.

To reconcile such jarring interests, and to effect a general pacification, was not in the power of a divided cabinet, whose measures fluctuated with continued versatility. Orders were occasionally given by lord Harrington, in conformity to the sentiments of the king, and contrary to those of the first minister. These orders were sometimes opposed, or at least secretly counteracted by Walpole; either by himself, in his personal conferences with the king and queen, or by means of the suggestions made by Horace Walpole, in his private correspondence with the queen, or by the agency of the duke of Newcastle, who at this period was devoted to him. Various instructions were conveyed to the foreign ministers, each contrary to the other, as the inclinations of the king and lord Harrington in favour of war, or the pacific sentiments of the first minister, gained the ascendancy.

The king was so highly displeased with the refusal of the minister to enter into the war, and gave such unequivocal signs of his displeasure, that queen Caroline could not venture to attempt openly to promote or justify his measures, but with a view to exculpate his conduct, artfully threw the blame on Horace Walpole, whom she often rallied in the king's presence as the principal cause of the inactivity of England, and hinted that his brother had been directed by his advice, influence, and known interference in foreign affairs*.

* Horace Walpole's Apology. Walpole Papers.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIFTH:

1735—1736.

Event of the general Elections.—Meeting of the new Parliament.—Proceedings.—Prorogation.—Difference between Spain and Portugal—adjusted by the armed Mediation of England.—Progress of Hostilities between the Allies and the Emperor.—Detail of the various Negotiations which led to the Conclusion of the Preliminaries.—King's Speech.—Unanimity of Parliament, in regard to Foreign Affairs.

THE minister and his friends laboured under great disadvantages, and had many difficulties to encounter in the management of the general elections. The inactivity and neutrality of England, became a matter of popular infamy; and even men of professed impartiality, severely censured the minister, by whose influence the inclinations of the king and the cabinet to assist the house of Austria were restrained. The common topics of want of spirit, and the dereliction of national honour, had great effect in exciting discontents, while the advantages derived from the continuance of peace to trade, manufactures, and agriculture, being tacitly progressive, did not immediately attract public attention, or procure their deserved applause. The rapid success of the French and Spanish arms, and the humiliation of the house of Austria, increased the national dissatisfaction. But above all, the excise scheme had excited ill humour and violent clamours, and it seems to have been ill judged in the minister to introduce it so short a time before the dissolution of parliament. It was more particularly offensive in Scotland, where the frauds in the customs were more extensive than in England. The greater part of the Whigs in Scotland were irritated against the court, and a large number manifested their dissatisfaction, in the manner of their opposition on the election of the sixteen peers. Several of the Presbyterians were averse to the minister for the continuance of the test act, the repeal of which, notwithstanding repeated declarations of his private good wishes, he had never promoted.

Walpole embarked in support of his friends in many expensive contests,
and

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1734 to 1737.

and expended a large sum out of his own private fortune *. The expences of the contested election for the county of Norfolk amounted to £.10,000, and yet he failed of success. The two candidates, Morden and Coke, who stood for the Whig interest, and whom he supported, were supplanted by Bacon and Woodhouse, who were favoured by the Tories. In consequence of these difficulties and defeats in his own county, the return of members who supported his administration was inferior in number to those who sat in the last parliament.

The new parliament assembled on the 14th of January. The speech from the throne alluded to a plan, formed in concert with Holland, to be offered as a basis for a general negotiation, mentioned the treaty with Denmark, and concluded by observing, that while war was raging in Europe, it would be proper for Great Britain to maintain herself in a posture of defence.

The opposition to the address, proposed by the ministerial party in both houses, was vehement and formidable. The amendments proposed by opposition, were supported with great ability, and the divisions of the anti-ministerial party were in the upper house 37 against 87, and in the commons 185 against 265.

During this session few debates of importance occurred, and none which personally affected the minister. Although he permitted several motions, made by opposition, to pass without a division, and in the contested elections as many were carried against as for administration, yet the material points proposed by government were acceded to. The subsidiary treaty with Denmark was approved; £.794,529 was granted for the land service, and 30,000 seamen were voted.

The attention of the house of lords was occupied by a petition from several Scotch peers, complaining of undue influence in the election of the sixteen. The minister was accused of engaging votes by various acts of corruption, and of overawing the electors by the presence of troops. The principal persons who conducted this attack, were those who had been deprived of their places, but though it was managed with great address and asperity, it terminated in his favour. The strength of the opposition was proved by the smallness of the majority, which on the first division was 90 against 47, and on the second, 73 against 39. Two violent protests were entered, the first signed by 33, the second by 32 peers †.

The session was closed by prorogation on the 15th of May, when the king, in his speech from the throne, expressed his intention of visiting his German

* Etouff says £. 60,000.

† Lords' Debates,

dominions,

dominions, and appointing the queen regent during his absence, of whose just and prudent administration, he had on the like occasion had experience. "Let me," he concluded, "earnestly recommend it to you to render the burthen of this weighty trust as easy to her as possible, by making it your constant study and endeavour, as I am sure it is your inclination, to preserve the peace of the kingdom, and to discountenance and suppress all attempts to raise groundless discontents in the minds of my people, whose happiness has always been and shall continue my daily and uninterrupted care *."

Chapter 45.
1735 to 1736.

The secret correspondence with cardinal Fleury was scarcely closed, when a dispute between Spain and Portugal brought on another series of intricate negotiations, and threatened to spread still wider the horrors of war †.

John the Fifth, king of Portugal, had espoused the archduchess Mary Ann, sister of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, and his connection with the house of Austria, had increased the hatred which his family bore to France. For some time after the peace of Utrecht, a great coolness had taken place between him and Philip the Fifth, the natural consequence of situation and connections. At length the jealousy and rivalry which had so long subsisted between them, in some measure subsided, and the two courts had been reconciled by a double marriage between Ferdinand, prince of Asturias, and Barbara, infanta of Portugal, and between Joseph, prince of Brasil, and the infanta of Spain. But this marriage did not long operate in preserving harmony, and a diplomatic dispute nearly produced an open rupture.

Affairs of
Portugal.

The servants of Don Cabral de Belmonte, the Portuguese minister at Madrid, being accused of having violently rescued a malefactor from the officers of justice, were arrested and carried to prison. The minister having complained of this insult, as an infraction on the law of nations, was warmly supported by his court; at the same time the Spanish ambassador at Lisbon, demanded satisfaction for the behaviour of the Portuguese minister, but instead of obtaining redress, he had the mortification of seeing nineteen of his own domestics arrested and sent to prison; and as neither court would give the satisfaction reciprocally demanded, the two ministers retired from their respective embassies, and both nations prepared for immediate hostilities.

Dispute with
Spain.

* Chandler. Journals.

† The substance of the remaining part of this chapter is principally taken from the same documents as the forty-fourth, from a second continuation of the paper, intitled, "Conduct of England, &c." from July to December 1734,

and from "A Summary Deduction of the Course of Public Affairs, from the Delivery of the Project of Accommodation by the Maritime Powers, to their Approbation of the Vienna Preliminaries," from February 1735 to January 1736. Walpole Papers.

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1734 to 1737.

Claims the
assistance of
England.

Inclined to
the Emperor.

April 17.

Don Azavedo, envoy from the king of Portugal, arrived at London, to solicit, by virtue of the subsisting treaties, and particularly that of 1703, the assistance of England, in favour of the king of Portugal, against an attack which he apprehended from Spain. To this demand the king returned for answer, that he would, agreeably to the honour of his engagements, immediately, in conjunction with the States General, interpose his good offices, and that in the mean time, to secure Portugal from any hostile attempt, especially against the Brazil fleet, which was then upon its return, a strong Squadron should be sent to Lisbon; advising the king of Portugal at the same time to shew a readiness in bringing this dispute to an accommodation.

This advice was by no means acceptable to the king of Portugal: he had seen with a jealous eye the recent successes of the Spaniards in Italy; he had beheld, not without regret, an advantageous peace which Philip had lately concluded with the Moors, and he expected, perhaps, that Spain would again revive their pretensions on Portugal, which, notwithstanding all renunciations, had never been sincerely relinquished. During the war he had uniformly espoused and approved the conduct of the Emperor; and persons of all ranks and distinctions in Portugal, had expressed their wishes in favour of the same cause. He was still farther exasperated against the court of Madrid, by the repeated complaints made by his favourite daughter Barbara, of the ill treatment which she received from the queen of Spain. These concurrent circumstances roused the resentment of John the Fifth, a prince of great spirit; and his violent temper was irritated to such a degree, that he was eager to commence hostilities against Spain, and warmly solicited both the king of England and the Emperor to conclude an offensive alliance. He said * to lord Tyrawley, the British ambassador at Lisbon, the time was now arrived to reduce Philip to reason; that so favourable an opportunity would never again occur; Spain was left in so defenceless a state by the numerous armies employed in Italy, that a small number of Portuguese would overrun the country without opposition; and that the British fleet would prevent the return of the Spanish troops from Italy. His confidential ministers publicly declared, that if manifestos from the prince of Asturias were dispersed, inviting the Spaniards to shake off the tyranny of the queen, and the incapacity of the king, the whole kingdom would rise in his favour; and with a view to induce England to embrace this measure, it was urged, that if the attempt of the prince of Asturias succeeded, Philip would be compelled to recall his troops from Italy, for the defence of his own kingdom; and that

* Walpole Papers. Lord Tyrawley to the duke of Newcastle, May 19, 1735.

the force of the allies would be so much weakened, that the Imperial troops might again acquire the ascendancy, and the house of Bourbon be frustrated in its attempts to lower the house of Austria.

These negotiations concerning the disputes between Spain and Portugal, were necessarily blended with those between the Emperor and the allies. The Emperor received the offers of Portugal with avidity, and gave unbounded promises of the most effectual assistance, trusting that if hostilities should take place between Spain and Portugal, England would be drawn into the quarrel, and a general war would be the unavoidable consequence. So great was the difficulty of reconciling two courts, both remarkable for pride and etiquette, and two sovereigns equally intemperate in their anger, and so impossible did it appear to foresee the consequences or controul the events, that a general and bloody war seemed almost inevitable. Affairs wore so gloomy an aspect, that Horace Walpole * says, in a letter to his brother, "I own I see nothing but black clouds gathering on all sides: I don't see a ray of light to disperse them."

But Sir Robert Walpole did not behold things in so discouraging a light, and the British cabinet, directed by him, acted with no less spirit than caution. In the beginning of June, a squadron of twenty-five ships of the line and several frigates sailed from Portsmouth, under the command of Sir John Norris, and arrived in the port of Lisbon. The destination of this fleet made a strong sensation at Paris and Madrid, and gave great weight to the armed mediation of England. Cardinal Fleury was particularly alarmed; he represented to lord Waldegrave †, in a most pathetic manner, that when the king of Portugal should see so *terrible a fleet* as twenty-five men of war, come to his assistance, he would reject all offers of mediation, the friends of the Emperor at Lisbon would encourage him to attack Spain, Spain would be defended by France, and Portugal by England, and a general war, of which no one could see the bounds or calculate the effects, would be the inevitable consequence. The British cabinet was not affected with these remonstrances; the squadron was not withdrawn, but a strong representation was made to the courts of Spain and France, that its object was only to protect the trade of the English subjects, and to defend the coast and commerce of Portugal against any attempt: that Sir John Norris was instructed not to act offensively, nor to encourage or assist the king of Portugal in offensive measures ‡.

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1735 to 1736

Prospect of a
general war.

English squadron sent to
Lisbon.

Alarms of
France.

* April 29th, 1735. Correspondence. † Mr. Keene to the duke of Newcastle,
† Earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, June 9th, 1735. Keene Papers.
-castle, June 1st, 1735. Correspondence.

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1734 to 1737.

Accommodation between Portugal and Spain.

Remonstrances of the Emperor.

England and Holland decline assistance.

Indignation and despondency at Vienna.

This spirited conduct rendered the ministry extremely popular in England, and greatly contributed to restore the tranquillity of Europe *. Spain having at first declined the proffered interposition, proposed at length to refer the decision of the differences to England and France; and Portugal, after making ineffectual endeavours to prevail on England to act offensively, finally acquiesced in the mediation of France and the maritime powers. Hostilities, though began in America against the Portuguese colony of St. Sacramento, never reached Europe; a convention, signed at Madrid, in July, 1736, under the mediation of the English, French, and Dutch plenipotentiaries, was followed by a peace, concluded at Paris, by which all differences were adjusted †.

A short time before the Portuguese minister solicited the assistance of England, the Imperial court delivered an answer to the plan of pacification; but this answer was only provisional, and not sufficiently explicit, and the acceptance of the armistice was restrained to such conditions as rendered it inadmissible. It concluded by exhorting the maritime powers to make such preparations as to be in readiness to act offensively if the allies should reject the plan. The Emperor ‡, at the same time, stated the right which he had acquired, as well by the treaties made in 1731, as by his conduct since that period, to the friendship and assistance of the maritime powers, against the unjust attacks and ambitious views of the house of Bourbon §, and made the most bitter reflections upon the unmanly and pusillanimous part, which those powers, especially the Dutch, had hitherto acted since the rupture. It was now evident that the Emperor would not hearken to any overtures of accommodation from the maritime powers, unless they promised to assist him, if the allies rejected the plan. They deemed it necessary therefore to declare, in the most positive terms, that they would not on any consideration engage in the war; and to represent to the Imperial court, the necessity of entering into a particular accommodation with Spain or France; with Spain, by giving in marriage an archduchess to Don Carlos, or with France, by exchanging Loraine for Tuscany. To this representation no immediate answer was given.

The notification to the Imperial court, in answer to the memorial delivered by Count Ulfeldt, that England and Holland declined taking a part in the war, was received at Vienna with the strongest symptoms of surprise and despondency; all that Mr. Robinson could draw from them, was

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 292.

† Walpole Papers. Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, August 16, 1735.

‡ Memoire raisonnée, March 15. Grantham Papers.

§ Deduction.

fullen and abrupt declarations of astonishment and affliction to see the Emperor thus abandoned by the very power from whom he principally and solely expected assistance. Bartenstein *, the confidential, though subordinate minister of Charles the Sixth, said, that Europe was lost, the Emperor was the first sacrifice. He knew, were he Emperor, what party he should take; he would let things follow their own course. The war would end of itself for want of matter to feed the flame. The enemies of the house of Austria would surely not require Vienna; with his hereditary countries the Emperor would still be sufficiently great for himself, though not useful to others.

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Prince Eugene also observed, that the wisest measure which the Emperor could follow, was to recal all his forces into his hereditary dominions, and suffer France to take the rest; if the maritime powers had no concern for them. But it was count Sinzendorff, who on this, as on all other occasions, used the most violent expressions of passion and fury. Having asked the British minister, if there were no succours to be expected, and receiving for answer, that in all probability there were none, he exclaimed, "What a severe sentence have you passed upon the Emperor! No malefactor was ever carried with so hard a doom to the gibbet." He was for burning Amsterdam, and for giving up Flanders; "there was, and there could be," he added, "no separate negotiation. The only means left for the Emperor, was to set fire to the four corners of the world, and to perish, if he must perish, in the general conflagration."

These violent expressions of indignation and despair, were soon followed by a suitable conduct; the Emperor was alarmed at the negotiations of France, Sweden, Prussia, and Turkey; at the union, concert, and progress of the allies in Italy; at the retreat of count Konigsberg into the Tyrol, which left Mantua to its fate.

He attributed to the treaty of 1731 all his misfortunes, which arose from a determined resolution of the French to destroy his succession, guaranteed by that treaty, and principally to the introduction of the 6,000 Spaniards into Italy; which enabled the French to gain over the king of Sardinia. Thus abandoned by his allies, he determined to separate himself from the maritime powers, and ordered count Kinsky to express his extreme astonishment at the conduct of England, and to affirm, that he had no other system of accommodation, than to submit to his enemies, when deserted by his friends.

In this situation of affairs, the mind of the Emperor was secretly agitated to such a height, as to raise apprehensions in the Empress, that his understanding might be affected by the conflict. "During the dead of the night," writes

* Walpole Papers. Mr. Robinson to lord Harrington, July 5th, 1735.

Mr.

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Mr. Robinson to lord Harrington, "and while he was singly with her, he gave a loose to his affliction, confusion, and despair." These agitations were augmented by a total distrust of his own ministers, excepting Bartenstein, who having less to lose than the others, flattered the Emperor with ideas more suitable to romantic glory, than to ordinary prudence. "This court," he adds, "is desperate, and no prudent man can foresee what may be the effect of a violent despair. The Emperor, as in a shipwreck, will lay hold on the first plank."

Peremptory
request of the
Emperor.
July 27th,
1735.

The same sentiments were enforced by count Kinsky *, in an audience of the king at Hanover. He represented the situation and strength of the Imperial troops, and desired his opinion upon the best method of employing them, either by sending large detachments into Italy, or by abandoning that territory, except Mantua, and the entries into the Tyrol; by collecting an army on the Rhine, to act offensively against France; or, lastly, by penetrating into France, on the side of the Moselle and the Netherlands. He required at the same time a precise declaration of the king's final intentions on the point of succours, and declared, that the Emperor would consider a delay or silence on this question, as an absolute negative; and must then provide, as soon, and as well as he could, for himself, by way of negotiation, without consulting the maritime powers, or considering their interests. A demand was at the same time made for a subsidy, either public or secret, which would enable him to support a large army in the field, and to lure the king of Sardinia from the party of France and Spain.

While the Emperor was thus appealing to the hopes and fears of the maritime powers, and warmly soliciting succours and subsidies, he threatened to abandon the Low Countries, and even to cede them to France, for the recovery of his Italian dominions, and the guaranty of the pragmatic sanction; a threat which excited strong apprehensions in the British cabinet, and was deprecated as an event of the utmost consequence to the commercial and political interests of England.

Walpole re-
news his
overtures to
France.

Mean time the British cabinet was employed in endeavouring to divide the allies, and in renewing their solicitations for peace, even to the very power by which they had been recently duped and deceived. Sir Robert Walpole was conscious that the only hopes of pacification depended on France, and if she could be brought to a sincere co-operation with England, the other belligerent powers, however averse, could not withhold their assent. He was

* Lord Harrington to the duke of Newcastle, Walpole Papers. Deduction.

desirous

desirous not to offend the cardinal, by shewing disgust at his duplicity; wished not to be precipitate in divulging the account of the secret negotiation; thought that the publication of that transaction should rather be the consequence than the forerunner or provocation of a war*. He was fully convinced, from his knowledge of the cardinal's and Chauvelin's characters, that unless the points of concession originated with them†, France would never be brought to guaranty the pragmatic sanction, which he considered as essentially necessary to the preservation of tranquillity in Europe; he was aware that the desperate situation of the Emperor's affairs in Italy, and his unwillingness to act in any degree cordially with the maritime powers, increased the difficulty of obtaining an accommodation, and that a peace would be cheaply purchased by suffering France to acquire Lorraine, provided Tuscany was given in exchange to the duke of Lorraine, the Milanese restored, and Parma and Placentia ceded to the Emperor, in return for the two Sicilies.

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In conformity with these views, Horace Walpole hinted, in a dispatch to lord Waldegrave, the circulation of a rumour in Paris, that the object of France was the acquisition of Lorraine, in exchange for Tuscany. Lord Waldegrave, in a conference with the cardinal, casually mentioned this report. The extreme pleasure which this hint gave, the pains he took in setting forth its expediency, and obviating all objections, sufficiently proved that this was the great point which France had in view‡.

Hints at the
cession of
Lorraine.

While the British cabinet were thus exerting themselves in favour of a pacification, and were endeavouring to persuade the Emperor and France to agree to terms of accommodation without the knowledge of the other powers, a secret negotiation was opened between the Emperor and France, without the concurrence of England. At the time that cardinal Fleury was holding the private correspondence with Horace Walpole, he made secret overtures to the Emperor, with the hopes of detaching him from the maritime powers. In his anniversary letter§ of compliments to the Emperor, on occasion of the new year, dated December 12th, 1734, he had added a postscript in his own hand, expressing, in the strongest terms, his affection and respect for the Emperor's person, as well as his earnest desire to see the peace of Europe restored. The Emperor, besides the usual chancery letter, returned an answer in his own hand, dated

Overtures
from Fleury
to the Em-
peror.

* Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, 30th May 1735. Correspondence.

† Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, April 13th 1735. Correspondence.

‡ The earl of Waldegrave to lord Harrington, June 7th, 1735. Walpole and Waldegrave Papers.

§ Walpole Papers. Summary Deduction.

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February 16th, to the said postscript, declaring his readiness, in conjunction with his allies, to listen to terms of amity, and the facility of obtaining a peace, if the cardinal would heartily promote it. These two letters were put into the hand of the Pope's nuncio at Brussels, to convey them to the cardinal; who, in opening the nuncio's packet (for he opened all his letters at arms length, and in the chimney) dropt the Emperor's particular letter into the fire, and could not recover it before it was defaced. The cardinal informed the nuncio, by a letter of March 10th, of this accident, and expressed his shame and concern. But the Emperor, considering this story as a mere fiction to excuse his silence, the correspondence was interrupted.

Soon after this incident, the Emperor, finding all attempts to induce the maritime powers to act offensively against France ineffectual, artfully made distant overtures to Spain, in relation to the marriage of an archduchess with Don Carlos, with the approbation of England. The dread of a similar union between Spain and Austria to that which took place in 1725, alarmed the cardinal; and he accordingly took occasion, by means of a confidential person at Paris, to convey to count Sinzendorff his wishes to conclude a peace directly with the Emperor, without the intervention of any other power, and added, that he would either depute a person of confidence secretly to Vienna, or the Emperor might send one to Paris, for the purpose of settling the conditions of a separate accommodation.

To this overture, the Emperor consented, and at the very moment when the cardinal was luring the British cabinet with the hopes of opening, under their auspices, a negotiation with the Emperor, he dispatched his agent, la Beaume, to Vienna. This transaction was carried on in so secret a manner, that although some suspicions were entertained, yet the first vague rumour of the mission was communicated by the earl of Waldegrave, on the 2d of August *, which he had casually derived from a spy in the secretary of state's office at Paris; and when he taxed the cardinal with his duplicity, the hoary minister did not blush to deny the fact, and because the negotiation was at that moment suspended, offered in the most solemn manner to take an oath on the bible †, that no private negotiation was at that time pending between France and Austria. La Beaume actually passed through the army, and after holding a conference with prince Eugene, arrived and had continued five weeks at Vienna, before Mr. Robinson ‡ enter-

* Walpole Papers. The earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, August 2, 1735. Correspondence.

† The earl of Waldegrave to the duke of

Newcastle, September 28, 1735. Correspondence.

‡ Walpole and Grantham Papers.

tained the smallest suspicions of the fact. The first intimation which he received from lord Harrington, appeared to him nothing more than an uncertain report, and it was not till after much minute inquiry, that he found the information to be true.

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Although the king, in his reply to Kinski, had declared that he would not take upon himself to give any advice, and urged that it would be extremely difficult to enter into the war without the concurrence of the Dutch; although he hinted at the several schemes of a separate negotiation; thought the exchange of the dutchies of Loraine and Tuscany preferable; insinuated the readiness of Spain to accept the second archduchess, and offered to assist in forwarding the match, or to adopt any other method for the purpose of effecting a pacification; yet the Emperor, well aware that the king was strongly inclined to afford active assistance, urged his claim with redoubled instances.

Anxiety of
the British
cabinet.

The earnest solicitations of the Emperor, his threats to abandon the Low Countries, and the knowledge of his secret negotiation with France, made a strong impression on the king and cabinet, and gave weight to the opinion of that party which inclined for war. For it was deemed far more eligible to encounter hostilities, than by a refusal of succours to throw the house of Austria into the arms of France, or by permitting the diminution of her territories, to enfeeble the only power which could effectually present a barrier to the encroachments of the house of Bourbon.

This desertion of the house of Austria in her extreme distress, gave great displeasure to several of the minister's friends and co-adjutors, and to none more than to lord Harrington, who, in his capacity of secretary of state, had the mortification to send instructions, and to forward measures contrary to his own sentiments. "The reasons," he observes, in a letter to Horace Walpole, "you alledge to prove that the treaty of Seville was not the cause of the Emperor's misfortunes are unanswerable, and I wish you could suggest as good ones (in case we are forced to it) for justifying to the Emperor our not assisting him; but if that could be done, to justify it to ourselves and our country; considering the present behaviour and operations of France and her allies, nothing but the most absolute inability can do it *."

Differences
in the cabinet.

In a subsequent letter, lord Harrington † even suggested a measure, which if followed, would probably have involved England in the war: it was to propose to the Dutch, either an augmentation of their forces, or to join

* Walpole Papers. Hanover, August 7th.

† Walpole Papers. Lord Harrington to Horace Walpole, Hanover, August 31.

Period VI. 1734 to 1737. the king in requiring from the allies a direct specification of the conditions on which they would conclude a peace, and to declare peremptorily, that unless a positive answer was given, England and the States would decline the mediation, and adopt the necessary measures for preserving their own security, and the equilibrium of Europe. He also urged, if the States should decline both these propositions, that England should withdraw from the mediation, and at the same time acquaint the Emperor, that the king would endeavour to assist him in making a separate peace with any of his enemies, and in failure of that attempt, would join with him afterwards in the war, if an opportunity should arise of doing it with success.

Effect of
them abroad.

The difference of opinion was now so great, the party for war was so warmly supported by the king, and that for peace by Sir Robert Walpole, as to occasion much indecision in the measures pursued abroad, and in the instructions sent to the foreign ministers. The French cabinet availed itself of these circumstances with considerable effect, and particularly in Holland, where Chavigny, in his passage through the Hague to Hanover, exaggerated the divided state of administration. He decried the spirited attempts made by Horace Walpole to infuse vigour and spirit into the counsels of the States General, and publicly declared, that the sentiments of the court and ministers of England, differed from the plan of pacification delivered by Horace Walpole to the States, and from the joint resolutions of the king and States, on the subject of the plan and armistice, communicated to the French ambassador on the 8th of June.

Sir Robert Walpole had given weight to this opinion, in a private interview with Chavigny*, who pressed him to bring about a pacification by a secret convention between France and England. He avowed his inclination for peace, and expressed his desire to settle the terms with cardinal Fleury, but denied his own power solely to carry any measure into execution. When Chavigny considered him in the light of prime minister, and argued that his known credit with the king would enable him to carry any point he thought necessary: "Let us suppose," replied Walpole, "That I should agree to any measure, without consulting the duke of Newcastle, who is secretary of state for the department of France, and the duke, on being informed of the transaction, should oppose it, what is to be done in that case? and what opinion would you have of me, to find things stopped and overturned by such an opposition?"

* Walpole Papers. Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, June 17th, 1735. Correspond.

It was impossible that affairs could long continue in this state of suspense, and that the tranquillity of Europe could be secured, while the cabinet of England was distracted and embarrassed. It became, therefore, necessary for the honour of the minister, as well as for the preservation of his system, to shew, that whatever private differences might exist in the cabinet, their public opinion was decidedly in favour of pacific measures; and to undeceive the Emperor in his expectations of assistance from the maritime powers, by enforcing the necessity of a separate accommodation either with France or Spain. These two objects were finally attained.

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In this dilemma, Walpole acted with the most consummate address. While the official dispatches from Vienna expressed the strongest disapprobation of the secret negotiation with France, and cast the most bitter reflections on the Imperial ministers, his letters, and those of his brother Horace, breathed nothing but pacific sentiments. They * palliated the conduct of the Emperor, and were anxious not to offend either him or France, by a violent and precipitate condemnation of their measures. They asserted, that although the alteration in the project from that offered by the maritime powers, was executed without the co-operation of England, and the king had just reason to complain of inattention and slight, yet as it was entirely agreeable to what England had proposed, the king could blame nothing but the form of proceeding. They observed, that it would be highly unbecoming to take offence at mere punctilious circumstances; they estimated the blessings of peace too highly to suffer etiquette to prevail over prudence, or to object to an agreement, merely because it did not exactly follow the original project; provided peace was the result, they both repeatedly declared, it was no matter by whom or in what manner it was procured †.

Address of
Walpole.

But though Walpole was anxious not to disoblige the Emperor, he would not sanction his demand of succours or subsidies; and as the king and part of the cabinet appear to have strongly recommended that measure, he was firm and decisive in enforcing his pacific sentiments. At length, after much opposition and some delays, a paper was transmitted to Mr. Robinson at Vienna, which seems to have been drawn up by himself. It stated the determined resolution of the king not to take any part in the war, to offer his intervention in favour of the Emperor, but not to send any assistance either in men or money.

Transmits a
final answer
to the Em-
peror.

* Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, December 9th, 1735. Correspondence.

† Horace Walpole to Thomas Robinson. Walpole Papers.

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Having arranged these difficult points, his opinion triumphed, and his pacific measures were adopted in their fullest latitude; the British cabinet now steered a steady and uniform course, no longer divided in counsels, or differing in sentiment; and their unanimous exertions were finally crowned with success.

It was their aim to make it the interest of France to co-operate seriously in the restoration of tranquillity, by candidly agreeing to such conditions as would justify cardinal Fleury in deserting Spain, and making a separate accommodation with the Emperor; and this measure could only be effected by facilitating the cession of Lorraine to France, in exchange for Tuscany, and to leave to cardinal Fleury and Chauvelin the manner of proposing it, and the specific plan to be laid before the Emperor for his approbation.

Plan of pacification:

The earl of Waldegrave *, in conformity to instructions sent from the queen, drew from cardinal Fleury a specific acknowledgment of his intentions. After increasing his alarm, at a resolution of the States, which seemed to announce the adoption of more vigorous measures, he represented the calamities ready to fall upon Europe, from his dilatory and irresolute proceedings; that he foresaw nothing but ruin and destruction from beginning and then dropping negotiations, and substituting new projects in their place. He gradually obtained, by artful questions, a confession that the exchange of Lorraine for Tuscany, was the great object of France; and finally, under a promise of the strictest secrecy, he prevailed on the cardinal to lay open his scheme for a general pacification, which, with a very few exceptions, was similar to that which had been proposed by the maritime powers. At the same time, the cardinal requested that the plan should be proposed and executed by England in concert with France; and he added, that such a peace, being established on the foundation of justice and reason, he would abandon his allies if they did not comply.

Laid before the Emperor.

Having thus prevailed on cardinal Fleury to acquiesce in the intervention of England, the next step was to gain the consent of the Emperor to the terms proposed by France, to be modified by England; and this was effected with equal ability. The British minister at Vienna †, in a private audience of the Emperor, represented the concern of the king at the unfortunate events of the war, and his indefatigable zeal and ardent wishes in desiring to put an end to the troubles of Europe. He observed, that the disappointment which

* The earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, August 2d. Correspondence.

† Thomas Robinson to lord Harrington, August 26th. Walpole Papers.

the king derived from his inability to enter into the war, was equal to that which the Emperor must have experienced in not having received that assistance which he so ardently expected. He urged, that in the present situation of affairs, there seemed no other expedient remaining, than to detach one of the allies, and that to carry that project into execution in the manner most agreeable, the king had expressed a desire to have the Emperor's opinion; and had been anxiously waiting for an answer. He then added, that he had now to submit to the Emperor's consideration, a strong instance of the king's confidence and friendship, which was to communicate the offer of a separate accommodation from France, nearly conformable to the plan proposed by the maritime powers, and acceded to by the Emperor; the cession of Loraine to France in exchange for Tuscany, to be given to the duke of Loraine on the decease of the present great duke, and concluded by saying, that the Emperor's consent to this plan would infallibly insure a successful issue.

In reply, the Emperor, after returning his grateful acknowledgments to the king for this instance of his friendship, added with much dignity, "Although I relied upon more substantial marks of friendship from the king, whose word was engaged by treaty to assist me with real succours, and although in a similar case I should not have withheld those succours which I stood engaged to by treaty, yet I am willing to believe that the disappointment which I have experienced, however fatal to myself and family, was less owing to want of inclination in the king, than to the impossibility of acting otherwise: notwithstanding this disappointment, I will pay all imaginable deference to the advice now communicated, and will appreciate as it deserves this mark of confidence. But as it is an affair of the highest importance and delicacy, and as the exchange does not totally depend on myself, I cannot give the previous promise which is now desired, even if I were convinced of the success; for the object under consideration is not so much what should be done, but whether it is proper to be done. I again assure you, however, that I will pay the greatest deference to the king's advice, and after I have duly reflected upon it, and consulted my council, if you desire it, will myself give the answer."

These declarations were soon followed by various explanations from the Imperial-ministers, and finally by a formal answer in writing. As far as could be gathered from the dubious and mysterious manner in which the court of Vienna enveloped their sentiments, it appeared as if the Emperor, on certain conditions, might be induced to accede to the overtures of cardinal Fleury, provided Tuscany was given unconditionally to the family of Loraine, and the king of Sardinia would accept the Langhes instead of the Tortonese.

Reply-

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Subsequent
proceedings.

Nov. 21.

Suspension
of arms on
the Rhine.

Amidst such discordant views as influenced the conduct of Austria and France, it was not to be expected that any conditions would be finally acceded to on either side without much altercation and delay. But it was a great point gained, that the contending parties seemed gradually drawing towards an amicable compromise. The object of England was secretly to assist in keeping up the intercourse recently established between the Emperor and France, to offend neither of those powers by censuring their conduct, but on the contrary, to declare that, although the king was not unacquainted with the secret negotiation, yet so far from opposing it, if it should be found not inconsistent with the equilibrium of Europe, he would be desirous of facilitating its successful issue.

The British ministers at the Imperial and French courts, were instructed to approve the basis of the agreement settled between France and the Emperor, of which they obtained certain information, and a counter project, with some few alterations for preventing the cession of Lorraine to France, without a sufficient indemnity, was drawn up by lord Harrington, and forwarded to Paris and Vienna. The consequence of this conduct was, that the Imperial and French courts at length acknowledged the secret negotiation, and that the British ambassador at Vienna received from prince Eugene, a project of the preliminary articles with which the Emperor and France were said to be contented, and to which the concurrence of the maritime powers was desired.

The answer to this project was made in the name of Great Britain and the United Provinces, who declared, that finding upon examination, that the preliminaries did not essentially differ from the plans before delivered, nor contain any thing detrimental to the equilibrium of Europe, the king and the Republic did not hesitate to declare their approbation and readiness to concur in a future treaty for bringing them to perfection, reserving to themselves the liberty of stipulating the necessary security for their own possessions, rights, privileges, and commerce.

The secret negotiation had already produced very advantageous effects in Germany; it occasioned an actual, though not a stipulated armistice on the Rhine. The French and Imperial troops did not undertake any offensive operations. Prince Eugene returned to Vienna in the month of October, and soon afterwards the two armies passed into winter quarters. But the same beneficial consequences could not take place in Italy, since the fate of the war did not wholly depend, as it did in Germany, on the *fiat* of cardinal Fleury, because no suspension of arms could take place, without the consent

consent of the king of Spain, who, eager to accelerate the possession of Mantua, would not easily be induced to agree to an armistice at the moment when he thought himself secure of success. But what could not be accomplished by persuasion or force, was finally effected by stratagem.

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One great object of the British cabinet was to prevent, or at least to protract the siege of Mantua, which was but scantily provided with ammunition and provisions. With a view to deter the French from attempting it, Horace Walpole, in a letter to the cardinal, and baron Gedda and lord Waldegrave in their conferences, represented, that although the English had declined going into the war, yet they would not see the house of Austria ruined, and that if Mantua was taken, and the Emperor was driven out of Italy, the maritime powers must come forward to his assistance. Fortunately, Mantua was the subject of contention between the allies in Italy. Philip was eager to begin the siege, conscious that the possession of that important fortress, as the key of Lombardy on the side of the Tyrol, would give to Spain the control of Italy. Cardinal Fleury himself, did not attempt to conceal his apprehensions of the consequences that would result from the capture. He said to the earl of Waldegrave*, that the fall of that place into the hands of the Spaniards, would defeat all his schemes, and render the king and queen of Spain untractable. He even promised, and in this instance did not belie his word, to give orders to the French general in Italy, not only not to press the siege of Mantua, but to protract the opening of the trenches, and even to place his troops in such a manner, as to permit the entrance of provisions into the town. The king of Sardinia went still farther, and in a letter to George the Second, declared that he was ready to join the maritime powers, if they would enter into the war †: expatiated on his own danger, should the possession of Mantua encourage Spain to deprive him of all the territories which had been allotted to him by his engagements with France. He pressed the king speedily to negotiate a peace between the Emperor and the allies, as the only means of preventing his falling a sacrifice to the resentment of Spain, for having delayed co-operating in the siege of Mantua. He declared that he would rather make a sacrifice of part of the Milanese, that the Emperor might retain a footing in Italy, by keeping possession of Mantua, with Parma, Placentia, and Tuscany, than even obtain possession of the whole Milanese.

Opposite
views of the
allies.

* Walpole Papers. Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, October 4th, 1735. Correspondence.

† Walpole Papers. Lord Harrington to the duke of Newcastle, Hanover, August 14th, 1737.

Period VI. on condition that Mantua, with the other possessions in Italy, should be ceded to Don Carlos *.

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In compliance with these views, he had positively refused to furnish a single piece of artillery, and secretly obstructed every measure which tended to facilitate the capture of that important fortress. By these manœuvres, the siege was protracted until the season was too far advanced; and Philip was thus prevented from gaining a preponderance in Italy, which would have rendered him too powerful in that quarter, and have induced him to refuse all conditions of peace which did not confirm the total exclusion of the Emperor.

England fomented the jealousy between France and Spain.

During this whole transaction, cardinal Fleury was kept in continual alarm, by repeated insinuations from Horace Walpole and the earl of Waldegrave, that the Dutch would be induced to act with vigour, provided France would not accede to honourable terms †. They also made continued representations to him, that the Emperor, if rendered desperate, would throw himself into the arms of Spain, and agree to the marriage of Don Carlos with an arch-duchess, which the French minister seemed to deprecate as much, or even more than the king of England. For the same purpose, the British cabinet never ceased making overtures, both to the Emperor and Spain, in favour of the marriages; and this business was so artfully managed, that though it was conducted under the appearance of the strictest secrecy, yet it was duly communicated to the cardinal in the manner the most likely to alarm him.

The cardinal had no sooner agreed to a separate accommodation with the Emperor, and a secret convention with England, than the recollection of his former insincerity in his correspondence with Horace Walpole, and the influence of Chauvelin over him, induced the British cabinet to keep him steady to his engagements, by opposing art to art, and intrigue to intrigue. They availed themselves of his apprehensions of a rupture with Spain, and of his dread lest a close union should be formed between Spain and England. Mr. Keene, the English minister at Madrid, executed, with much address, the instructions of his court on this head. From the time of the first official communications from cardinal Fleury, of the secret accommodation between France and the Emperor, and the partial suspension of arms in Italy, without the knowledge or consent of Spain, he artfully fomented the resentment which the court of Madrid entertained against France, for deserting and betraying the common cause. He encouraged the irritable and punc-

* The duke of Newcastle to lord Harrington, June 6, 1735. Walpole Papers.
† Horace Walpole's Apology.

vious disposition of Philip the Fifth, who was piqued at being betrayed by his native country; he increased while he affected to allay the ungovernable fury of the queen, who aspired to make her son, Don Carlos, master of Italy, and who considered the disposal of Parma and Tuscany to the Emperor, as an injurious deprivation of her own inheritance.

Chapter 45.

1735 to 1736.

The court of Spain was so irritated, that Mr. Keene observed, in a letter to the duke of Newcastle *, "There is scarce any thing that they would not do, to revenge themselves upon the French; you will easily judge of their desire to do it, when, contrary to their pride, they make such applications to the king before they know the least of his majesty's sentiments. I wish, indeed, that matters may not have been pushed rather too far; for hitherto I found more disposition in them to sit down quietly with their mortification, if there was no remedy, than I do at present; but they now seem to be driven to despair, and to be resolved to act as people in that state."

Even Don Patinho, the first minister, who was so mysterious, that, according to cardinal Fleury, he always spoke as well as wrote † in cypher, was so highly irritated, that he proposed, in unambiguous terms, to undermine the French commerce with Spain, and particularly that with the Indies, by increasing the English trade; "and thus we shall," as he observed to the British minister at Madrid ‡, "revenge ourselves upon the cardinal in the most easy and effectual manner, and kill him *with a staff of cotton* §."

The British cabinet, long accustomed to the violent and changeful temper of the court of Madrid, and well knowing that the king, though alienated by temporary displeasure, was from principle and interest attached to France, amicably deprecated these counsels, and urged the good policy as well as necessity of acceding to the preliminaries.

The result of all these wisely combined measures, was the signature of preliminaries for a general pacification, which was concluded on such favourable terms, that even lord Bolingbroke, the implacable enemy of Sir Robert Walpole, observed, that, "If the English ministers had any hand in it, they were wiser than he thought them; and if not, they were much luckier than they deserved to be ||."

Signature of the preliminaries.

The opinion which truth extorted unwillingly from lord Bolingbroke, that

* Madrid, December 10th, 1735. Keene Papers.

† The earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, October 28th, 1733.

‡ Benjamin Keene to the duke of Newcastle, November 28th. Keene Papers.

§ Un Bâton de Coton.

|| Lord Hervey to Horace Walpole, December 23d, January 3d, 1735. Correspondence.

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King's
speech.

January 15.

the terms of the preliminaries were as just and honourable as the circumstances would permit, seems to have been the opinion of the greatest part of the nation; for the annals of England give no instance of a session in parliament which passed with so little opposition, in regard to foreign affairs, as that in the commencement of 1736. With becoming pride and satisfaction, for having settled the great outlines of a general peace, the speech from the throne expressed the pacific sentiments of the minister, that provided peace was made, it was no object of consideration by whom, or in what manner it was made. After mentioning the happy turn which the affairs of Europe had taken, and after observing, that a plan of pacification had been proposed by the king, in conjunction with the States, and that the Emperor and France had separately concerted the preliminaries for obtaining that end, the king said, "It appearing, upon due examination, that these articles do not essentially vary from the plan proposed by me and the States, nor contain any thing prejudicial to the equilibrium of Europe, or to the rights and interests of our respective subjects, we thought fit, in pursuance of our constant purpose, to contribute our utmost towards a pacification; to declare, by a joint resolution, to the courts of Vienna and France, our approbation of the said preliminaries, and our readiness to concur in a treaty to be made for bringing them to perfection."

As an infallible symptom of peace, he noticed, that a considerable reduction would be made both by sea and land, and concluded with this pathetic exhortation to moderation and harmony at home: "I am willing to hope, this pleasing prospect of peace abroad, will greatly contribute to peace and good harmony at home. Let that example of temper and moderation, which has so happily calmed the spirits of contending princes, banish from among you all intestine discord and dissension. Those who truly wish the peace and prosperity of their country, can never have a more favourable opportunity than now offers, of distinguishing themselves, by declaring their satisfaction in the progress already made, towards restoring the public tranquillity, and in promoting what is still necessary to bring it to perfection *."

On this occasion, the address was carried in the house of commons, not only without a division, but without the smallest opposition, and the session ended with scarcely a single reflection on the conduct of foreign affairs; a singular phenomenon in the political annals of this country.

* Chandler, vol. 9. p. 103, 104. Journals.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SIXTH:

1736.

Parliamentary Proceedings.—Gin Act.—Motion to repeal the Test Act, negatived.—Bill for the Relief of the Quakers passes the Commons, but is thrown out by the Lords.—Account of Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London.—Prorogation.—Horace Walpole declines the Office of Secretary of State.—Accompanies the King to Hanover, as Vice Secretary.—Foreign Negotiations.—Prudence of Sir Robert Walpole.—Private Correspondence with his Brother.—Objects to guaranty the Provisional Succession to Berg and Juliers.—Opposes the Northern League, and the Mediation between Russia and the Porte.—Promotes the definitive Treaty.—The Delays of the Emperor.—Ineffectual attempt to bribe Chauvelin.—Secret Correspondence with Cardinal Fleury, and Dismissal of Chauvelin.

THE parliamentary proceedings of this session, relating to domestic affairs, were, in general, of little importance. The only subjects which it may be necessary to particularize, were The *Gin Act*; the repeal of the test act, and the bill for giving relief to Quakers.

Parliamentary proceedings.

The act for laying a tax on spirituous liquors, and licensing the retailers, was a measure in which the minister had no immediate concern, but for which he suffered much unmerited obloquy. The bill was principally promoted by Sir Joseph Jekyll, from a spirit of philanthropy, which led him to contemplate with horror the progress of vice, licentiousness, and immorality that marked the popular attachment to these inflammatory poisons. This benevolent attempt embarrassed the minister, but did not answer the desired end.

Gin act.

It was incumbent on the minister to prevent any diminution of the revenue of the crown, and for that purpose to supply any deficiency which might arise from the reduced consumption of spirituous liquors; but this attention to his official duty, exposed him to much intemperate abuse, and he was reproached for wishing to sacrifice the morals of the people to financial considerations. After many debates, in which the minister took an active share, the bill passed, and £.70,000 per annum was granted to the king as a

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compensation for the diminution of the civil list, to which the duty had hitherto belonged *.

The populace shewed their disapprobation of this act in the usual mode of riot and violence. Numerous desperados availed themselves of the popular discontents, and continued the clandestine sale of gin in defiance of every restriction. The demand of penalties, which the offenders were unable to pay, filled the prisons, and removing every restraint, plunged them into courses more audaciously criminal. It was found, that a duty and penalty so severe as to amount to an implied prohibition, were as little calculated to benefit the public morality as the public revenue, and, as Walpole predicted, a subsequent administration was obliged to modify the measure.

Repeal of
the test act.

Few subjects were more embarrassing to the minister, than the proposed repeal of the test act. He had for a long time acted with the dissenters; he fully appreciated the advantage which the protestant succession had derived from their exertions; he had received from them the warmest support; he knew that they had reason to expect relief from a protestant king, whom they had assisted in placing on the throne; he had even given them hopes, that the time was not far distant, when they might obtain what they so earnestly desired. In this session, the motion for repealing the test act was prematurely brought forwards by Plummer, who supported it in a very able speech. Though the minister opposed the motion in the present instance, he did it with such candour and moderation, and "expressed himself so cautiously, with regard to the church, and so affectionately, with regard to the dissenters, that neither party had cause to complain of him. The public has been long informed of all the arguments urged for and against the motion, as almost every year produced some event that revived them, therefore they are omitted here. The motion was negatived by a majority of 251 against 123 †."

March 2d
and 12th.

Negatived.

Quakers' bill,
March 2d.

Yet, although the minister thus opposed the repeal of the test act, he warmly patronised and supported a bill for the relief of the Quakers, who presented a petition to the house of commons. It stated, "that notwithstanding the several acts of parliament made, for the more easy recovery of tythes, and ecclesiastical dues, in a summary way, by warrant from justices of the peace, yet as the said people conscientiously refused the payment, they were not only liable to, but many of them had undergone grievous sufferings, by prosecution in the exchequer, ecclesiastical, and other courts, to the impropriety

* Chandler, vol. 9. p. 172.

† Tindal, vol. 20, p. 323. Journals.

sonment of their persons, and the impoverishing and ruin of them and their families, for such small sums as were recoverable by those acts; and therefore praying, that the house would be pleased to afford them such relief as to them should seem meet *."

Chapter 46.

1736.

Though the minister and the majority of the house were disposed to favour the petition, and a bill was framed accordingly, yet the great interest of the established clergy, rendered it a matter of much difficulty. Counter-petitions poured in from all quarters, setting forth, "That such a law would be extremely prejudicial to themselves and brethren, excluding them from the benefit of the laws then in being, for the recovery of tythes and other dues, and thereby putting the clergy of the established church, upon a worse foot than the rest of his majesty's subjects; and praying to be heard by Council against the bill †."

March 26.

Notwithstanding all obstacles, the disposition of the house was very strong in favour of the quakers. Their petition was not considered a party affair; and the proceedings against many of them, had such an air of persecution, as procured them many friends amongst all parties. The bill underwent great alterations in the committee. The main intention of it was, to make the determination of two justices of the peace final, as to all payments of tythes and church dues, when the quaker, who was to pay them, did not litigate the same, which the justices were to certify under their hands and seals, without fee or reward. But in case the quaker should litigate the payment, then either party, who should dissent from the adjudication of the justices, might have recourse to the courts in Westminster hall. The payment of all church and chapel rates, if refused by quakers, were, upon the complaint of the churchwardens, to be levied by distress, by order of two justices, upon their goods, in the same manner as the poor rates are levied, and no quaker was to be sued or prosecuted for not paying any church or chapel rates, in any other manner.

Such was the main purport of this famous bill (though clogged with a great number of other clauses); when after long debates, and several divisions, it passed the house of commons, by a majority of 164 against 48 †.

Passes the
commons.
May 3d.

In the upper house it was successfully opposed by the interest of the church and the law; a considerable number of courtiers were also non-contents. The two great lawyers, lord chancellor Talbot and lord Hardwicke, made a strong impression by observations on the incorrectness and imperfections of the bill,

Rejected by
the lords.

* Chandler. Journals.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

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Dissatisfac-
tion of the
minister.

Resentment
against
bishop Gib-
son.

Account of
that prelate.

for the amendment of which, the short remainder of the session would not afford time. "The speakers on both sides displayed great abilities and temper, but when the question was put, for committing the bill, it passed in the negative, by a majority of 54 against 35 *."

The minister was highly dissatisfied with the rejection of a bill which he was induced from various considerations to promote. He was strongly averse to all measures which bore the appearance of persecution in religious matters. His conduct was also influenced by personal considerations. A large body of quakers were established in the county of Norfolk, and particularly in the city of Norwich, who had always supported the candidates whom he favoured at the general elections, and he was anxious, from a principle of gratitude, to prove that he was not unmindful of past favours, and deserving of future assistance. These motives operated so strongly in its favour, that few circumstances ever ruffled his temper, or affected his equanimity more than the rejection of this bill. He bitterly complained of the vindictive spirit which reigned in the house of lords, and his resentment was principally excited against the bishop of London, to whom he attributed its defeat. That prelate had prevailed on the bench of bishops, to give their decided opposition to the bill, and had exhorted the clergy, in all quarters of the kingdom, to petition against it, as highly prejudicial to the interests of the church. In consequence of these exertions, the minister, with a spirit of acrimony very unusual to him, withdrew from the learned prelate the full confidence which he had hitherto placed in him, and transferred into other hands the conduct of ecclesiastical affairs with which he had been chiefly entrusted.

Edmund Gibson was born in 1669 †, and educated at the free grammar school at Bampton, in Westmoreland, the place of his nativity. At the age of seventeen, he was admitted a scholar of Queen's college Oxford, and raised himself into early notice by various publications, which proved his classical erudition, his accurate acquaintance with the Northern languages, and a correct knowledge of the Roman and Saxon antiquities, and British topography. His great talents and extensive learning, introduced him to the patronage of archbishop Tenison, who made him librarian of Lambeth, and appointed him his domestic chaplain. By the archbishop's interest, he became precentor and residentiary of Chichester, rector of Lambeth, and archdeacon of Surry. In 1713, he gave to the public that great and la-

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 315. Lords' Debates.

† Biographia Britannica.

borious work, intitled, "Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani, or the Statutes, Constitutions, Canons, Rubricks, and articles of the Church of England, methodically digested under their proper heads; with a commentary, historical and juridical, and with an introductory discourse concerning the present state of the power, discipline, and laws of the church of England, with an appendix of instruments, antient and modern, in folio."

Being a great friend to the protestant succession, he was promoted, in 1716, to the bishopric of Lincoln, and in 1720 translated to the see of London.

In this eminent station, he enjoyed the full confidence of the king and ministry, and was principally consulted by lord Townshend and Sir Robert Walpole, in all ecclesiastical matters, particularly during the long decline of health which incapacitated archbishop Wake for transacting business. He was always zealous in supporting the establishment of the church of England, and uniformly opposed the repeal of the test act. He declined a translation to Winchester*, and looked forwards to the primacy with such confidence of expectation, that he was called by Whiston, heir apparent to the see of Canterbury. These well-founded hopes were frustrated by the indignation of Walpole for his opposition to the quakers' bill. On the decease of Wake, the see was conferred on Potter. And when, on his death, in 1747, it was offered to Gibson, he declined it on account of his advanced age and increasing infirmities†. He died on the 6th of February 1748.

The inveteracy displayed against this eminent prelate for the conscientious discharge of his duty, reflects no credit on the memory of Sir Robert Walpole. His esteem for the bishop of London had been so great, that when he was reproached with giving him the authority of a pope, he replied, "And a very good pope he is‡." Even after their disagreement, he never failed to pay an eulogium to the learning and integrity of his former friend.

On the 20th of May, the king put an end to this late session of parliament, by a speech, in which he acquainted both houses, "that since the preliminary articles had been concluded between the Emperor and his most Christian majesty, a further convention, concerning the execution of them, had been made and communicated by both those courts, and that negotiations

Prorogation
of parlia-
ment.

* Letter from bishop Gibson to Sir Robert Walpole. Orford Papers.

† Letter from bishop Gibson to the king,

communicated by the bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Douglas.)

‡ Etough's Minutes of Conversations with Sir Robert Walpole.

were

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were carrying on by the several powers engaged in the late war, in order to settle the general pacification." He expressed himself with great concern in relation to the seeds of dissension that had been sown amongst his people, exhorting his parliament to cultivate unanimity, and promising impartial protection to all his subjects. He then acquainted them, that being obliged that summer to visit his German dominions, he hoped that they would make the administration of the queen, whom he had resolved to appoint regent during his absence, as easy to her, as her wise conduct would render her government agreeable to them *.

Horace Walpole declines the office of secretary of state.

At this period, Sir Robert Walpole and his brother gave a memorable proof of their prudence and moderation. The king being dissatisfied with lord Harrington, proposed to dismiss him from the office of secretary of state, and queen Caroline offered the place to Horace Walpole; but conscious that the elevation of two brothers to the principal posts of government, would augment the jealousy and popular outcry which already prevailed, and fearful lest so important a change should increase the divisions among the ministers, he declined the offer. The king, however, would not admit lord Harrington's attendance at Hanover, and though he acquiesced in the refusal of Horace Walpole, yet he insisted on his undertaking the employment of secretary of state during his residence abroad; an order which Horace Walpole, though he attempted to elude, could not venture to disobey, and accordingly accompanied the king to Hanover †.

Accompanies the king to Hanover. Confidential correspondence.

As the king was extremely jealous of being governed, and yet as his ignorance of the English constitution, and his natural attachment to German measures, rendered it expedient that he should be advised by those who were responsible for the administration of affairs, it became necessary to convey this advice in so delicate a manner, that he should appear to guide the reins, which were conducted by another hand. With this view, a confidential correspondence was carried on between the two brothers; and as the king always expected to see any private letters which passed between them, an arrangement was made, that ostensible letters should be sent for the perusal of the king, and confidential ones to Horace Walpole alone. A part of this correspondence is still preserved; those letters of Sir Robert Walpole which relate to foreign affairs, prove, as usual, his extreme caution in avoiding, as much as possible, any continental embarrassments, which were not immediately necessary to the preservation of external peace and internal tranquillity.

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 325. Journals. Chandler.

† Horace Walpole's Apology.

The letters on domestic occurrences, are chiefly concerning the murder of captain Porteus; tumults in Spitalfields, on employing Irish manufacturers, and the riots on account of the gin act. They display his good sense and prudence, in endeavouring to prevent rather than punish disturbances, and yet indicate no deficiency of vigour, when it was requisite to act with spirit.

Chapter 46.

1736.

Besides the difficult task of settling the disputes between the Emperor and the allies, which encountered continual obstructions from the discordant views of the contending powers, three foreign objects of great importance principally occupied the attention of the king at Hanover, and gave sufficient employment to the sagacity of Walpole: The regulation of the succession of Berg and Juliers; the project of a league with the northern powers; and the mediation between Russia and the Porte.

Foreign affairs.

John William, duke of Cleves, Juliers, and Berg, dying in 1609 without issue, his dominions were claimed by the houses of Saxony, Brandenburg, and palatine Newburgh. After a long contest, the disputed succession was regulated by a family compact, and divided between the great elector Frederick William, who was descended from the eldest sister of John William, and Philip William, duke of Newburgh, afterwards elector palatine, who was descended from the second sister. Frederick William obtained Cleves, La Marck, and Ravenstein; Philip William, Juliers and Berg. By the family compact, it was stipulated, that should the male issue of either branch become extinct, the other should inherit the whole succession.

Berg and Juliers.

1666.

As at this period Charles, son of Philip William, had no issue, and was advanced in years, the succession of Berg and Juliers was claimed by Frederick William, king of Prussia, grandson of the great elector. But his claims were opposed by Charles Frederick, prince palatine of Sultzbach, of the collateral line of the house of palatine Newburgh, as being lineally descended from the third sister of the last duke of Cleves. He accordingly remonstrated against the family compact; and was supported in his pretensions by the elector palatine, to whom he was presumptive heir. This succession had long been a favourite object of Frederick William: He was prepared to assert his pretensions with his whole force, on the death of the elector palatine, and was secure of wresting these duchies from the house of Sultzbach, had not the latter been openly supported or secretly abetted by other powers.

It became an object of common prudence and policy, to obviate the difficulties which were likely to arise on the death of the elector palatine, and to regulate, if possible, the provisional succession to the disputed provinces, in such a manner as to prevent the disturbance of the public peace.

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But

Period VI. But the discordant views and complicated interests of the powers who were
 1734 to 1737. capable of interfering with effect, gave little hopes of a successful and stable arrangement.

France had given her guaranty to the house of Sultzbach, but she had given it at a time when she was interested to secure the palatine family, and as that motive no longer operated with the same force, it was probable that she would act in conformity to the situation of affairs at the time of the vacancy.

The Emperor, with his usual duplicity, had secretly guaranteed the provisional succession to both the contending parties; but although he had lured Frederick William with the most solemn professions to support his pretensions, yet he was known to be secretly inclined to favour the house of Sultzbach. In all events, however, he was unwilling to offend either Prussia or the palatine family, and was no less anxious than France to avoid a public declaration of his future resolutions.

The Dutch, whose territories bordered on Berg and Juliers, were more than any other power interested to prevent any disturbances on the death of the elector palatine, and extremely anxious to propose such an accommodation as should remove the apprehensions of a war. They therefore applied to the Emperor and France, and desired the king of England's concurrence to act in concert with them, for disposing those two powers to propose instant and proper measures for obviating the troubles by an accommodation between the contending parties, and preventing all hostile aggressions while that accommodation was negotiating.

George the Second, highly disgusted with the king of Prussia, was averse to support any measures which might tend to his aggrandisement, and would not easily be prevailed on to guaranty his succession to Juliers and Berg, unless some advantage was stipulated for himself. For this reason, the Dutch had proposed that East Friesland, to which both he and the king of Prussia had pretensions, should, on the death of the reigning sovereign without issue, revert to George the Second as elector of Hanover, the right of maintaining a garrison in Embden being reserved to the Dutch. They farther recommended, that in consideration of renouncing his claim on East Friesland, such a portion of Juliers and Berg, as might be adjudged to the king of Prussia, should be secured under the guaranty of England.

The king seemed inclined to consent to these stipulations; but the minister, strongly averse to complicated and distant guaranties, expressed his objections to all interference; declared himself against prematurely agreeing to guaranty the succession of Berg and Juliers, in which they might be left singly with the Dutch, or making any declaration which might disoblige
 either

either Prussia or the palatine family. He stated the great inconveniences which might arise from blending that affair with the general transactions then in agitation, when the Emperor and France had agreed to postpone the consideration of it till the chief business of the present negotiation should be concluded. His opinion prevailed, and all thoughts of interference were relinquished*.

The northern league was the object which most embarrassed the minister, and reduced him to the necessity of opposing the king's inclinations. Rosencrantz, the Danish minister at Hanover, with a view to benefit his own country, and Mr. Finch, the British envoy at Stockholm, from a desire of favouring the court at which he was employed, had represented to the king the good policy of forming a league between the maritime powers, and Sweden and Denmark. The king, who understood the interests of Hanover better than those of England, and who could not sufficiently appreciate the great commercial and naval principles by which the minister was actuated in forming alliances and giving guaranties, eagerly embraced, and zealously supported the scheme; and with a view to keep the king of Prussia in awe, proposed † the accession of Russia. He communicated his wishes to the queen, and requested the opinion of Sir Robert Walpole in such a manner, as sufficiently proved to which side he inclined. The minister disapproved the measure, and considered it not only as highly inexpedient, but as absolutely impracticable. He was convinced that such an alliance with Sweden would offend the Czarina, unless she was invited to accede, and that her accession could not be obtained but by guarantying the possession of Livonia and Ingria, which would no less offend Sweden.

Project for a
northern
league.

In his ostensible letter to his brother, Walpole frankly stated his objections to precipitate resolutions, recommended cautious proceedings, and particular attention not to offend the Emperor and Russia, and reprobated expensive and burthensome guaranties.

As the negotiation became more and more complicated, and the king seemed inclined to persevere in his opinion, Walpole prudentially insinuated, that a matter of such extreme delicacy and importance, should be transacted by an official correspondence, rather than by private letters between the king and queen. The king having approved this proposal, Horace Walpole was ordered to prepare the project, and received hints from his brother in

Counteracted
by Walpole.
August 15.

* Sir Robert Walpole to Horace Walpole, June 18th, 1736. Correspondence. Thoughts on the Succession of Berg, Juliers, and East Friesland, by Horace Walpole. Walpole Papers.

—History of the Succession to the Duchies of Juliers and Berg.

† Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, August 5. Correspondence.

Period VI. 1734 to 1737. what manner it should be drawn. Being submitted to the king, he highly approved it, and was eager for the conclusion. It was then transmitted to Sir Robert Walpole for the consideration of the queen and the lords justices, and was accompanied by a paper of private observations against the treaty. The minister found this paper so convincing, that although intended for his own use, he communicated it to the queen. Convinced by the soundness of the arguments, she promised to conceal any knowledge of this paper from the king, and to write her sentiments in conformity to that opinion. At the same time, Sir Robert Walpole wrote an ostensible letter to his brother, informing him that he should decline laying the project before the cabinet council, lest the sudden disclosure of so important a transaction, might create surprise and alarm, and proposed to delay the communication until the negotiation was farther advanced, the inclination of the northern courts founded, and the situation of affairs more settled, "that we may see" he adds "who and who are together, before we form new schemes, that may clash with we know not whom nor how." These prudent measures were attended with the desired effect, and the king finally consented to abandon his favourite project.

This whole transaction reflects equal honour on the minister and the king: On the minister, for frankly delivering his sentiments, and ~~pre~~serv^{ing} in them, though opposite to those of his sovereign; on the king, for yielding to the arguments and wishes of his faithful counsellor. Those who consider the impatience of contradiction, and pertinacity of opinion, which marked the character of George the Second, will highly appreciate the merit of his submitting to the guidance, and conforming to the advice, which so strongly contradicted his own wishes.

War between
Russia and
the Porte.

In the midst of these transactions, hostilities broke out between the Russians and Turks, which, in consequence of the alliances of France and Sweden with the Turks, and of the Emperor with Russia, appeared likely to excite a general war; yet, contrary to these expectations, this event contributed more than any other cause to accelerate the pacification in Europe. The Emperor, divided between the fear of irritating the Czarina on one hand, and of retarding the peace on the other, and tempted with the hope of sharing the spoils of the Turks, became less averse to the aggrandisement of the house of Bourbon.

Walpole de-
clines me-
diating.

A mediation between the contending powers had been proposed by Calcoen, the Dutch minister at Constantinople, and too eagerly adopted by the English ambassador, Sir Everard Fawkener. Walpole was apprehensive lest the Czarina should construe a premature officiousness into a partiality for the Porte,

Porte, and consider it as an attempt to stop the career of that success with which her arms were crowned. [Chapter 46.
1736.]

He was alarmed, lest the dignity of England should be lowered by offering the mediation before it was desired, and without a certainty of its being accepted. He was convinced, that any attempt to reconcile Russia and the Porte, would be fruitless and ineffectual; and he observed, in a letter to Horace Walpole, "For my part, I think you may as well hope to break in upon the constancy of two lovers in the honey-moon, as to stop the career of two powers just engaged in war, in the heat of their resentment, and before they have had time to feel, to reflect, and grow cool *." His advice prevailed also in this instance, and the mediation was declined.

The signature of the preliminaries between France and the Emperor, did not, however, produce an immediate pacification. Several months elapsed before the kings of Sardinia and Spain could be prevailed on to accede, and when their concurrence was reluctantly obtained, disputes occasionally revived between France and the Emperor, and a long series of negotiation took place before the final ratification.

Difficulties
in reconciling the
Emperor and
the allies.

Nor are these delays to be attributed solely to the allies. The Emperor, though a prince of high spirit, and by no means deficient in capacity, was of such a changeful and capricious temper, and appeared so different at different intervals, that to define his real character and situation, confounded the wisdom of the wisest, and baffled the conjectures of the most enlightened.

Capricious
disposition of
the Em-
peror.

At one time he was so exasperated with England, that he threatened to separate himself from her for ever, and was so devoted to France, as to induce Mr. Robinson to observe, in a letter to lord Harrington, "This court is too much in the hands of that of Versailles, not to do every thing that the other wills, or to do any thing that the other wills not." At another time he courted England with the greatest eagerness; denounced the house of Bourbon as his irreconcilable enemy, and offended cardinal Fleury by the most arrogant and presumptuous demeanour. With a prince of such a changeful temper, it was no easy task to negotiate. His ministers were no less intractable; and Vienna exhibited a motley scene of pride, humility, cabal, intrigue, and procrastination.

June 20.

Another great difficulty arose from the duke of Lorraine, who had espoused the eldest archduchess, Maria Theresa, and was unwilling to renounce his family inheritance. He required, that if Lorraine was ceded to France before the

Dissatisfac-
tion of the
duke of Lo-
raine.

* Sir Robert Walpole to Horace Walpole, August 20 1736. Correspondence.

death.

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death of the grand duke of Tuscany, an adequate compensation should be secured to him. Mr. Robinson, in one of his dispatches, gives a pathetic and interesting account of his extreme distress and agitation on this occasion *. "In an audience which I demanded of him, to announce the marriage of the prince of Wales with the princess of Saxe Gotha, he interrupted me in the midst of his compliments, to pour out his joy at the marriage, and his respect and veneration for the king, which he first expressed aloud; but lest any of his attendants in the next room might overhear, he retreated with me to a window at the farther end of the apartment, and said with the greatest emotion, "Good God, where are you, where are the maritime powers! As for my part," he continued, "I rely upon the king singly, not upon treaties, not upon formal promises, but upon what his majesty has told me over and over again of his goodness for me by word of mouth." If his words expressed the highest agony and distress, his gestures and actions expressed no less: "He threw himself, in a reclining posture, and in an inconsolable manner, upon the arms and end of an adjoining table and chair." "Such also," adds Mr. Robinson, "is the extreme agitation of his mind, that his health is affected by it; he owns that he has no friend to look up to, and that next to God and the Emperor, all his fortune depends on the king of England."

Views and
conduct of
the Em-
peror.

Perhaps these complicated disputes would never have been settled without another war, had not the pacific spirit of Walpole and Fleury interposed, and had not the Emperor, eager to make war against the Turks, with a view to indemnify himself on the side of Bosnia, for the loss of Naples and Sicily, found it previously necessary to secure the peace of Italy, that he might draw his troops into Hungary.

The French, aware of his inclination, refused, under various pretences, to evacuate the Milanese; the Emperor was induced to make repeated concessions, and finally to yield the immediate possession of Loraine, for the eventual succession of Tuscany. He was so eager to conclude the definitive treaty, that he paid 600,000 florins more than he had stipulated. He gave to the king of Sardinia, estates among the Langhes, as fiefs of the empire, which never belonged to the empire, and suffered that monarch to mark the limits of his dominions according to his own convenience †.

Ineffectual
attempts to
bribe Chau-
velin.

In the course of these various negotiations, Walpole had used every effort to conciliate discordant parties, and to effect a general accommodation.

* Mr. Robinson to lord Harrington, May 30th, 1736. Walpole Papers.

† Thomas Robinson to lord Harrington, August 5. Grantham Papers.

He well knew that the great obstacles to a general peace, proceeded from the intrigues of Chauvelin, who, from the time of his appointment to the office of secretary of state, and keeper of the seals, almost invariably used the ascendancy which he had gained over cardinal Fleury, in counteracting the designs of England. To obtain his co-operation, Walpole directed his principal attention, and even adopted the chimerical project of bribing him to compliance. The prospect of success was principally founded on the extravagance of Chauvelin. He lived in a style of great profusion. He had laid out, and continued to expend large sums in beautifying his favourite villa of Gros Bois, which vied in magnificence with the royal palaces.

With whom or in what manner the scheme originated, the papers under my inspection do not supply specific information. Sir Robert Walpole was too cautious to make such attempt, had not some favourable circumstances occurred. It is not improbable that a hint imparted by Trevor, and insinuated in a letter from Horace Walpole to queen Caroline, might have suggested the first * idea. It was an experiment which the minister deemed it imprudent to reject, though he never entertained sanguine hopes of success. Perhaps the first opening was afforded by Chauvelin himself, who, to support his own declining interest, was desirous of securing the assistance of Sir Robert Walpole, with whom Fleury was anxious to co-operate in establishing the peace of Europe. But he had no sooner effected a temporary re-establishment of his credit, than he discontinued this private correspondence, rejected all pecuniary gratifications, refused to give any farther information, and became, as before, the inveterate enemy to England.

The origin, progress, and termination of this intrigue, are detailed in the private correspondence which passed between Sir Robert Walpole and the earl of Waldegrave, and was communicated only to the king. In the succeeding year, Chauvelin made another attempt to renew his secret offers, in such a manner as induced the earl of Waldegrave to conclude, that he would accept a bribe. Walpole wrote to the English ambassador, to avoid being again deceived; to offer a large bribe, of not less than £. 5 or 10,000, and if that was not accepted, to obtain the removal of one whom he calls our quondam friend, but now our greatest enemy †.

While this intrigue was in agitation, cardinal Fleury, in a confidential conversation with the earl of Waldegrave, made heavy complaints against

Fleury proposes an alliance with England.

* Horace Walpole to queen Caroline, August 1735. Correspondence.

† Sir Robert Walpole to the earl of Waldegrave, September 26, 1726. Correspondence.

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Secret correspondence
with Walpole.

the conduct of the British ministers abroad, and proposed, through the channel of Horace Walpole alone, an alliance with England *, to check the ambitious designs of the Emperor, and keep in awe the restless spirit of the queen of Spain, who had so often convulsed Europe to aggrandise her own family. The answer of Horace Walpole began with a spirited remonstrance against the weakness of the cardinal, in listening to all the idle and malicious reports of those who endeavoured to sow dissensions between the two crowns; stated the impossibility of acceding to the proposal of a particular union with France in the present juncture, because Chauvelin would obstruct and disappoint all hopes of bringing it to a successful issue. He concluded with representing, that the king had always had in view the preservation of the tranquillity and equilibrium of Europe; that the numerous treaties which France had made before the late troubles, and the complicated negotiations for the execution of the preliminaries, in which the king had not participated, rendered it impossible to determine what measures or alliances would be most proper for preserving the balance of power, until the whole plan of the peace should be proposed; that if the plan should appear conformable to that great end, the king would support it by every means in his power; and concluded with representing, that the cardinal would always find the king disposed to preserve a good understanding with France.

Foiled in this attempt, the cardinal endeavoured to succeed by opening a private correspondence with Sir Robert Walpole, the knowledge of whose pacific sentiments, inspired him with the confidence and hopes of imposing upon him, and drawing him in gradually to abet the alliance with France, and by that means to separate the Emperor still more from England. Two conversations which the cardinal held with the earl of Waldegrave on this subject, will serve to shew the art with which he endeavoured to amuse the British cabinet †.

After delivering his sentiments on the murder of captain Porteus, and recommending lenity to the misled populace who were concerned in that transaction, he represented the necessity of curbing the overgrown power of the Emperor; hinted as his opinion, to be solely communicated to Sir Robert Walpole, that the best method of effecting that end, would be a league of the protestant princes in Europe, to be proposed by England, and supported by France. In reply to these friendly communications, the minister commissioned lord Waldegrave to express great respect for the cardinal, and an

* Horace Walpole to the earl of Waldegrave, August 8-19th, 1735. Correspondence.

† The Earl of Waldegrave's letters to Sir

Robert Walpole, October 23d, and November 21st, 1736. Correspondence.

earnest

earnest desire to cultivate his friendship, for the mutual honour and interest of the two kingdoms. At this, the cardinal interrupting him, expressed the highest opinion of Sir Robert Walpole's distinguished abilities, and particularly expatiated on his integrity and spirit, characteristics highly necessary in the composition of a great minister. He then proposed a secret correspondence, through the channel of the earl of Waldegrave, to which, in France, no one should be privy but the king, and in England, only the king and queen; trusting, on his part, that no advantage would be taken, and no hints given of this intercourse.

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Although Sir Robert Walpole was not ignorant, that during these overtures, the cardinal had been endeavouring to persuade the Emperor to conclude a definitive treaty, exclusive of the maritime powers, he neither reproached him for his insincerity, nor declined the offer of a confidential communication. He on the contrary affected to disbelieve, while he hinted the report, because, he said, it contradicted the declarations so frequently and solemnly made by the cardinal, that the maritime powers should be included in all the definitive transactions for a treaty, as also, because he did not doubt his sincerity in desiring a particular alliance with England. Uniformly attached to his grand principle of promoting peace by whomsoever, or in whatever manner it was effected, he expressed his readiness to concur in all measures which might be just and honourable to the two nations, and requested him to draw up the heads of a definitive treaty.

Although the earl of Waldegrave justly remarked, from his knowledge of the cardinal's character, that much could not be concluded from these private transactions, they served, however, to preserve harmony, and to soften the immediate effects of that inveterate jealousy which had so long divided the two nations. The mutual interchange of friendly discussion strengthened the pacific sentiments adopted by both ministers, and prevented the hasty renewal of offensive measures. The outlines of the definitive treaty were settled, and the conclusion of the general pacification accelerated.

Effect of the
Correspondence.

Another considerable advantage was also unquestionably derived from this private transaction. It gave to Sir Robert Walpole and the earl of Waldegrave, opportunities of representing the malicious conduct of Chauvelin, and occasioned, or hastened his downfall, which took place in the commencement of the ensuing year, and to which the representations of Waldegrave greatly contributed.

Disgrace of
Chauvelin.

Before the dismissal of Chauvelin, an interesting correspondence had passed between the two brothers and the other ministers, relating to a curious

The Pretender's
letters.

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rious incident that happened to the earl of Waldegrave at Paris. Chauvelin having, among other papers, by mistake, put into his hands a letter from the Pretender, the ambassador sent it by a courier to the queen. Immediate information was forwarded by Newcastle to the king at Hanover, with the remarks of Sir Robert Walpole. Several letters passed between the minister in London, Horace Walpole at Hanover, and the earl of Waldegrave at Paris, which prove the extreme uneasiness and jealousy excited by this discovery.

Jacobitism at that time produced a tremor through every nerve of government; and the slightest incident which discovered any intercourse between the Pretender and France, occasioned the most serious apprehensions. It was no wonder, therefore, that this event should spread alarms, which the observations of the two brothers were calculated to obviate. The letters which passed on this occasion, are given in order of date, and are sufficiently explicit without any farther illustrations*.

Riots in
London :

During the absence of the king at Hanover, where he remained till the beginning of January, the spirit of discontent and insurrection was busy at home; and various tumults took place in the capital, and other parts of the kingdom. In the capital, these disturbances were occasioned by the weavers in Spitalfields, who took umbrage that the Irish were employed at an inferior rate of wages; and by the discontent of the populace, excited by the execution of the gin act.

And Edin-
burgh.

These alarming riots, which were notoriously fomented by the disaffected, were scarcely suppressed, when a more atrocious outrage demanded the attention of government. One Wilson, a daring smuggler, was sentenced to be hanged at Edinburgh, for having robbed a collector of the revenue. This man, having abetted the escape of his fellow criminal, in the time of divine service, and from the midst of his guards, the magistrates of Edinburgh increased their usual precautions for the execution of the sentence, by ordering the officers of the train bands and the city guard, provided with arms and ammunition, to attend for the purpose of preventing his rescue. The procession passed along; the sentence was performed without the smallest appearance of a riot, and the executioner was at the top of the ladder cutting down the body, when the magistrates retired. At this moment, the populace rushed forward towards the gallows, part forced their way through the guards, with intention, as was supposed, to carry off the body, under the hopes of recovering it. Others threw large stones, maimed several soldiers, and

* Correspondence. Period VI. Article, the Pretender's Letter.

struck captain Porteous, who was so provoked at this outrage, that he ordered the soldiers to fire. Five were killed, and several wounded. Porteous was immediately apprehended, and tried, for having directed the soldiers to fire without the orders of the civil magistrate, and was condemned to death. But so many favourable circumstances appeared on his trial, that seven of the fifteen jurymen acquitted him, and the verdict which condemned him, acknowledged that "he and his guards were attacked and beat with several stones of a considerable bigness, thrown by the multitude, whereby several of the soldiers were bruised and wounded *." In consequence of this ridiculous inconsistency in the verdict, and other favourable circumstances, the queen regent sent down a respite of six weeks, for the purpose of inquiring into the circumstances of the case.

On the 3d, the reprieve was brought to Edinburgh, and on the 4th, vague reports were circulated, that the populace had resolved, on the evening of the 8th, to set fire to the prison, if Porteous was not executed on that day, according to his sentence. But the magistrates, on inquiry, could not discover any foundation for the report, and no precaution was taken to remove the prisoner into the castle. On Tuesday the 7th, about a quarter before ten at night, the magistrates had notice, that a few boys had seized the drum in the suburb of West Port, and beat it in the Grass Market within the city. About six minutes before ten, they sent to call out the guard immediately under arms; but a few minutes before the clock struck, a mob suddenly rushed in upon, and surprised the guards, drove them from the guard room, seized all their arms, being ninety firelocks in number, besides several Lochaber axes, and almost at the same time made themselves masters of the city gates. They then provided themselves with shot, by breaking open the shops where ammunition was sold, attacked the jail, drove out the provost and magistrates, who attempted to disperse them, and wounded several of their attendants. They next set fire to the gate of the prison, and rushed into the wards, forced the turnkeys to open the doors, released all the prisoners, seized Porteous, and dragged him to the Grass Market, where they broke into a shop, took out a coil of ropes, and hung him upon a dyer's cross post, close to the common place of execution †. Lindsay, member for the city, found means to escape from the town, and to convey information of the tumult to general Moyle, commander of the king's troops, who were quartered in the suburbs; but as he was obliged to

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Murder of
Porteous.

* Trial and Sentence. Political State, 1736; and Gentleman's Magazine.

† Narrative of the Tumult. Correspondence.

Period VI. 1734 to 1737. make a large circuit, he did not reach the head quarters till near eleven. General Moyle had already collected his own troops, and sent for those who were quartered at Leith, but made no attempt to force the gate of the city, which was occupied by the armed populace. He persisted in refusing to act against the insurgents, on the faith of Lindsay's intelligence, without an order from the civil magistrate; and as he deemed it impossible to obtain an order from the magistrates in the city, he dispatched a messenger to Andrew Fletcher, lord justice clerk of Scotland, who was at his villa at the distance of above two miles and a half. Fletcher being in bed, no answer was procured until one o'clock, and by some mistake, it was then delivered not to the general, but to Lindsay. Meanwhile, the execution of Porteous had taken place, the exertions of the military were rendered unnecessary, by the dispersion of the rioters, and in the morning, Edinburgh was in a state of perfect tranquillity.

Lord Ilay was sent to Edinburgh, as the only person capable of bringing the offenders to justice. The accounts * which he transmitted to Sir Robert Walpole, proved that a regular systematic plan had been formed with the utmost secrecy and order; that several made this infamous murder a point of conscience; and that one of the actors went to a country church, where the sacrament was given to a large number of people in the church-yard, and boasted of the share which he had taken in the transaction. He observed, that persons who affected sanctity, spoke of the murder as the hand of God doing justice, and reprobated all endeavours to bring the actors to condign punishment, as grievous persecution. He added also, that although several persons had been imprisoned, and large rewards offered, no discoveries had been made of the perpetrators or instigators of this atrocious act.

* Correspondence.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SEVENTH:

1737.

Meeting of Parliament.—Speech from the Throne.—Proceedings:—On the Bill respecting the Tumults at Edinburgh.—On Sir John Barnard's Scheme for the Reduction of Interest.—Licentiousness of the Stage.—Origin and Progress of the Playhouse Bill.

THIS session of parliament, which opened on the 1st of February, was as unquiet and stormy, as the last had been easy and tranquil.

The parliamentary proceedings which it is necessary to notice, are the debates respecting the tumults in Edinburgh; Sir John Barnard's proposal for the reduction of interest; the playhouse bill, and the motion for an address to the king, to settle £. 100,000 per annum on the prince of Wales.

The speech from the throne noticed the late disturbances, but without any specific mention of the tumult at Edinburgh. It was answered by loyal addresses from both houses, expressing their abhorrence of such outrages, and their resolution to support the royal authority in suppressing all riotous and seditious attempts, which threatened the very being of the constitution. The minister, however, seems to have been embarrassed in what manner to introduce the inquiry. Fortunately, lord Carteret relieved him from this dilemma. Although he was in violent opposition to the measures of administration, yet he justly thought that the indignity committed against the established government, should not remain unpunished. He accordingly referred to that part of the speech which alluded to the tumults in various parts of the kingdom. After arguing that these riots did not proceed from disaffection to government, and complaining, that notwithstanding the power with which the civil magistrate was armed, the military force had been employed in suppressing them, he adverted to the murder of captain Porteous, which he particularly stigmatized as a most atrocious deed; observing that the conspiracy which had effected it was the more dreadful, because it was concerted and executed with great deliberation and method, and was attended with no other disorder. He was of opinion, that some citizens of Edinburgh

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Parliamentary proceedings.

On the murder of Porteous.

In the house of lords.

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burgh had been concerned in the murder; that the magistrates had encouraged the riot, and that the city had forfeited its charter; he concluded with expressing hopes that an inquiry would be made into the particulars and circumstances of the case.

The duke of Newcastle and the lord chancellor, after contending for the necessity of employing the military force in suppressing riots and putting the laws in execution, and justifying the reprieve of captain Porteous, did not resist or promote the investigation proposed by lord Carteret; they only argued for a general inquiry into the causes and circumstances of the riot, and not for a specific inquiry into the disturbances. Carteret, in reply, maintained the necessity of a particular inquiry, and of confining it to the tumult at Edinburgh. The earl of Ilay, after opposing the forfeiture of the charter, and observing that the outrages had originated from disaffection to government, declared himself in favour of a particular inquiry, and expressed his readiness to join in any proposition for that purpose. A motion was accordingly made by Carteret, for the attendance of the magistrates, and other persons who could give the necessary information, and for an address to the king, that copies of the trial of captain Porteous, and the account of the murder, should be laid before the house.

In consequence of this motion, which passed without opposition, the respective documents were produced. In examining the proceedings of the trial, it plainly appeared that Porteous was fully justified, from the principles of self-defence, in firing upon the mob, and that the reprieve granted by the queen was founded on law and justice; and as the constitution of the criminal law in Scotland was different from that in England, it appeared incomprehensible to most of the peers, that a person could be condemned to death, upon a verdict so inconsistent with common justice. Accordingly, it was suggested by Carteret, to declare the verdict erroneous; this proposal was opposed by the earl of Ilay and the lord chancellor, and no motion was made*.

Having thus justified the proceedings of government, the next object was to discover those who were concerned in the murder, and to punish all who either concerted or connived at it. The magistrates of Edinburgh, the commander in chief of the forces, Lindsay, member for the city, as well as the Scots judges, were severally and separately examined at the bar. Their allegations, however, were confused and unsatisfactory; but proofs appeared that the magistrates had not been sufficiently active in preventing the rising of the mob, or in suppressing it when excited. Yet no legal evidence was obtained to convict them, nor did it appear that any of

* Lords' Debates.

the citizens had been accessory to the murder, and not a single person was discovered who had been concerned in it. Notwithstanding this deficiency, the majority of the peers thought it necessary to bring in a bill of pains and penalties against the provost and city, for conniving at, or not preventing the perpetration of so atrocious a deed.

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The bill was opposed in a very animated speech by the duke of Argyle, who contended that it was an *ex post facto* law, punishing a whole community for crimes within the reach of the inferior courts of justice. It was nevertheless carried by a majority of 54 against 22, and sent down to the commons, under the title of "An Act to disable Alexander Wilson, esquire, from taking, holding, or enjoying, any office or place of magistracy, in the city of Edinburgh, or elsewhere, in Great Britain, for imprisoning the said Alexander Wilson, and for abolishing the guard kept up in the said city, commonly called the town guard; and for taking away the gates of the Nether Bow Port of the said city, and keeping open the same."

May 11.

Such was the title, and such were the penalties of this famous bill, as it was sent to the commons. It is certain, the ministerial party in the house of peers, had not thoroughly considered the nature of the Scottish constitution, as left by the act of union; nor was the evidence sufficient for justifying the severities contained in the bill. Wilson, the lord provost, was a weak well-meaning man, and had acted to the best of his courage and capacity; and the greatest imputation fixed on him by evidence, was his not having been active in arming the citizens the day before the riot had happened, when only vague rumours were whispered. With respect to the penalties inflicted upon the city of Edinburgh, doubts were raised whether they could regularly be imposed, even by a British parliament, consistently with the articles of union*.

Accordingly, the opposition was violent and strenuous; most of the persons who had appeared at the house of lords, were again examined before the commons; petitions were received, and counsel heard against the bill. The Scottish members, who were affected by the stigma to be affixed on their capital, and looked upon the question as a national concern, uniformly opposed, and many of them, particularly Duncan Forbes, the lord advocate of Scotland, displayed great abilities. On every reading it produced fresh debates, and in one instance was carried only by the casting voice of colonel Bladen, the chairman of the committee.

In the house
of commons.

Walpole spoke only on the first reading, and then he said but a few words

* Tindal.

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in reply to those who objected to the bill, because it originated in the house of lords. He observed, that he was as jealous of their right as any other gentleman could be, but thought too scrupulous a jealousy at this time might be attended with the worst consequences. In reply to an observation of Duncan Forbes, that tenderness ought to be shewn to the corporations and boroughs which the commons represented, especially those of Scotland, he urged that the commitment of the bill was the greatest mark of tenderness which could be shewn. It was to punish, in an exemplary manner, a practice that had been too much encouraged; a practice, which if not suppressed, must destroy the right of all corporations, and perhaps abolish the privileges of the house, and the very form of the constitution. He concluded, by saying, that gentlemen would not oppose the bill without better reasons than any that had yet appeared. He did not enter into the merits, or discuss the proofs of the objections urged by the Scottish lawyers, but left those points to be argued by the attorney and solicitor general. He by no means made it a ministerial question. In the house of lords, some of his friends had promoted and others resisted it, and on one question, the duke of Newcastle and lord chancellor Hardwicke had voted on different sides. The same circumstance occurred in the house of commons. Some of the most violent opposers of government befriended the bill, and others absented themselves while it was depending. He was most anxious that the queen should be justified for granting the reprieve, and that some punishment should be inflicted on the magistrates, as an example to deter others, and to render the civil power responsible for outrages committed in their jurisdiction: A salutary and essential act of policy.

When these points were gained, he was not inclined to enforce the penalties. He suffered therefore the bill to be modified and mitigated. That part which ordered the abolition of the city guard, and the demolition of the gates, was omitted, and the whole was reduced to an act "for disabling Alexander Wilson, the provost, from taking, holding, or enjoying, any office, or place of magistracy, in the city of Edinburgh, or elsewhere, in Great Britain, and for imposing a fine upon the said corporation, of £. 2,000, for the benefit of the widow of Porteous *." The bill, however, thus mitigated and rendered "stingless †," met with unceasing opposition, and after having narrowly escaped being thrown out, was sent back to the lords, who agreed to the amendments, and it finally received the royal assent.

* Tindal.

† Ibid.

While this act was in agitation, another passed the lords, and was sent down to the commons, "For the more effectual bringing to justice, any persons concerned in the barbarous murder of captain John Porteous, and punishing such as shall knowingly conceal any of the said offenders." This bill was of a severe nature, and was directed to be read, for a stated time, by the established clergy of Scotland, in their pulpits, every Sunday. Amongst other clauses, it contained an indemnity to any person who was concerned in the murder, provided he discovered and convicted an accomplice, before the first of February. This clause was added to the bill by the commons, as was also another, promising "a reward of £. 200 to any one who should discover, and convict, by their evidence, any person concerned in the murder." These provisions were by many thought too severe, and censured as giving too great encouragement to informers. The Scots, when the act was read to them, treated it with the utmost contempt; and though many thousands were publicly concerned in the murder, and some of them tried, yet none were legally convicted*.

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June 3.

These proceedings augmented the unpopularity of the minister, by inflaming the resentment of Scotland, and facilitated the efforts of the duke of Argyle, to return, at the next elections, a majority of the Scots' members in favour of opposition.

Sir Robert Walpole incurred great censure by the alienation of the sinking fund; and has been exposed to no less obloquy, for his opposition to Sir John Barnard's scheme, for reducing the interest of the national debt. He has been accused by party, prejudice, or misapprehension, of the meanest motives for adopting this line of conduct: motives so contradictory, that they refute each other. By some †, he was suspected of having clandestinely promoted the introduction of the bill. It was insinuated that, at first, he intended it should pass; and that he only deferred the measure until the queen, who was supposed to have a million in the funds, could sell out to advantage. Others ‡, on the contrary, ascribe his opposition to the mean spirit of jealousy, and reproach the minister with having exerted the whole power of government, that he might deprive Sir John Barnard of his due applause.

Proposal for
the reduction of interest.

In the committee of supply the minister moved a resolution, that a sum of one million should be taken from the sinking fund, and applied to redeem a million of old South Sea annuities. The motion was opposed by

March 9.

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 344.—The reader is referred for the above particulars, to the Correspondence—Lords' Debates—Chandler—Journals—Tindal—Political State of Great Britain.

† Opinions of the Dukes of Marlborough, p. 45.

‡ Sinclair on the Revenue, chap. 5.

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several members, principally of the minority, who argued for the expediency of appropriating that sum to the discharge of the debt due to the bank, because the interest paid to the bank was six per cent. whereas that on the other parts of the public debt did not exceed four. They accordingly proposed the amendment; but the original motion was carried without a division.

Sir John Barnard's scheme.

On the 14th of March the resolution was reported and agreed to*. On this occasion, Sir John Barnard proposed, that the house should resolve itself into a committee, to take into consideration the national debt, and to receive any proposal which might be made to reduce the interest to three per cent. The minister, after a few observations on the danger of meddling with public credit, or taking any step which might be likely to affect it, without the most mature reflection, declared that he had no objection to a committee, because time would be allowed for deliberation; and concluded, that if any seasonable scheme for reducing the interest should be then proposed, he should readily agree to it.

On the 18th, the account of the national debt, which amounted to £.47,866,596, was produced. On the 21st, the house resolved into a committee of supply, and Sir John Barnard brought forward his scheme. With a view to popularity, it was called, a proposal towards lowering the interest of all the redeemable debts to three per cent. and thereby to enable the parliament *to give immediate ease to his majesty's subjects*, by taking off some of the taxes which are most burthensome to the poor, and especially to the manufacturers, as likewise *to give ease to the people*, by lessening the annual taxes for the current service of the year †.

Though

* Journals.

† The proposal was as follows:

"That an offer be made to the proprietors of the South Sea annuities, as well old as new, at such times as the respective transfer books shall be shut, in the following manner, viz. That all persons be at liberty to make their option for the whole, or any part of their capital of one or more of the particulars undermentioned, for which books be laid open at the South Sea house, for so long time as shall be thought proper, viz. All who desire to be paid their money, to enter their names and sums in one book. Those who shall chuse to have annuities for certain terms of years, and the capital to be annihilated, may subscribe in particular books for that purpose, at the following rates:

" For 47 Years at 4 per Cent. per Ann.			
31	Years at	5	- - -
23½	Years at	6	- - -
19	Years at	7	- - -
16	Years at	8	- - -
13½	Years at	9	- - -
12	Years at	10	- - -

"That the proprietors of so much of the capital, as shall not be claimed in money, nor subscribed into some of the annuities for terms of years, shall, for the future, be intitled to an annuity of 3 per cent. per annum only. And for the encouragement of the annuitants to accept of 3 per cent. per annum, it is proposed, that they be not subject to redemption or diminution of their annuities for the term of 14 years. And that all the annuities for terms of years be transferable at the South Sea house, without

Though the principle of the measure was such as to intitle its founder to expect much popularity, yet as the interests and prejudices of many persons were to be combated, great opposition was excited, and the stores of argument and calculation exhausted in defending the plan.

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Sir John Barnard moved, in a committee of supply, "that his majesty be enabled to raise money, either by sale of annuities for years or lives, at such rates as should be prescribed, or by borrowing at an interest not exceeding three per cent. to be applied towards redeeming old and new South Sea annuities, and that such of the annuitants as should be inclined to subscribe their respective annuities, should be preferred to all others."

March 21.

This motion occasioned long debates. It was principally defended by the landed, and resisted by the monied interest, and the minister's friends were divided. The house did not appear inclined to adopt any specific determination; some of those who were averse to the measure, declared themselves incapable of giving their opinion, without due reflection and more information. They moved, therefore, that the farther consideration should be deferred till that day se'nnight, which was agreed to without opposition. This point being carried, the adversaries of the bill made another effort, which was attended with success. It had been urged as an objection, that a considerable part of the South Sea annuities belonged to widows and orphans, and to persons who were proprietors of small sums: This suggestion had a great effect upon the house. Willing therefore to take advantage of this impression,

without any charge; as well as the annuities which shall be continued at 3 per cent. per annum. And that all the annuities for terms of years, commence from the determination of the annuities of 4 per cent. without any loss of time. It is apprehended, that this offer will be more beneficial to the proprietors than the remaining in their present situation, and receiving a million at a time, to be divided alternately between the old and the new annui-

tants, which must affect them in a very high manner, as it tends greatly to reduce their capital, by continual laying out the money paid off in new annuities at advanced prices.

"If the parliament should be willing to indulge any persons, not being foreigners, who may be advanced in years, with annuities for term of life; the following rates are submitted to the consideration of gentlemen who have turned their thoughts to this subject, viz.

To Persons 44 Years old, or upwards, 7 per Cent. for Life.

53	-	-	-	8
59	-	-	-	9
63	-	-	-	10

"If these rates for lives, or any other rates, should be thought convenient to be offered; it is then proposed, that the old and new annuitants be permitted to subscribe any part of their capital, they being within the limitation of years above expressed; and that none of the proposals foregoing be made for ready money;

because it is reasonable that the present creditors should have the preference in any advantageous offer made by the parliament, as this is apprehended to be, since money may be raised at 3 per cent. per annum, with a liberty of redeeming the same at pleasure."

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they moved on the following day, that an account should be laid before the house, of the quantity of old and new South Sea annuity stock, holden by any executors, administrators, or trustees; which accounts were presented on the ensuing Friday.

Hitherto the minister took no public part, either for or against the scheme; although he was generally supposed * to be inclined in its favour. But from this period he was determined to oppose it, though he thought it prudent to act with circumspection, as many members, who were personally attached to him, favoured the measure. In this situation the minister had watched the progress of public opinion, and found it decidedly adverse to the proposal, which excited the most violent clamours among the proprietors of the funds.

During the adjournment of the business, the ministerial papers were filled with objections to the measure, and a perspicuous statement †, exposing

* Robert to Horace Walpole. Trevor, April 19, 1737. Correspondence. Opinions of the dukes of Marlborough.

† "As I can by no means approve of the scheme, published in your paper of Saturday last, for reducing the interest of the national debt to 3 per cent. I shall, for the sake of those who are not acquainted with calculations of this kind, make a few observations on the proposed method of reduction, that such proprietors of the public funds may see how far their interests are like to be affected by it. And, in the first place, I observe, that the annuities proposed for certain terms of years are calculated at compound interest, allowing the annuitants 3 per cent. for their money, and the surplus of the annuity is to reimburse them their purchase money at the same rate of interest.

"To explain this, I shall fix upon the first annuity proposed, which is 4 per cent. for 47 years, at the end of which the capital is to be annihilated. By this proposal, the purchaser is to receive 3 per cent. interest, and the remaining 1 per cent. is to reimburse the purchase money in the term proposed at compound interest; but I cannot think this a fair method of computation in the present case; for, although it be true, that £. 1 per annum will, in 47 years, amount to £. 100 at compound interest; yet it is highly improbable, if not impossible, that interest upon interest, or indeed any interest at all, should be made of such small sums for 47 years running, as must be

done, to raise the sum advanced; and therefore such a method of calculation must be fallacious, and nothing but the surplus of the annuity can be safely relied on for reimbursement of the purchase money; and then it will be evident to the meanest capacity, that if the annuitants are allowed 3 per cent. for their purchase money, they will, at the end of 47 years, have received no more than 47 per cent. of their principal; and in all the other cases the purchasers of the proposed annuities will be considerable losers; only it is to be observed, that the shorter the term is, the less the loss will be: for if the annuity be 7 per cent. for 19 years, the purchasers will receive back 76 per cent. and if 10 per cent. be allowed for 12 years, they will receive back 84 per cent. of their principal money: The reason of which is very obvious to those who know, that compound interest is a series of geometrick progression.

"Secondly, I observe, that if, out of any of the proposed annuities, there is annually reserved a sum sufficient to reimburse the purchase money, the annuitants will not receive an interest of 2 per cent. upon their principal. And for the proof of this, I shall only take notice of the two extremes and middle term in the annuities proposed; by which it will appear, that if £. 2 out of £. 4 be reserved for 47 years, it will raise no more than £. 94, and if £. 5 out of £. 7 be reserved for 19 years, it will amount to no more than £. 95, and £. 8 out of £. 10 for 12 years, will give only £. 96.

"Thirdly, It is to be observed, that the method

exposing its inexpediency, appeared in the Whitehall Evening Post, which was either drawn up by the minister himself, or approved by him. In the same paper, of the 26th, an appeal was made to the feelings and passions of the public, in which the bill was described, as tending to ruin trade, to depopulate the capital, to impoverish widows and orphans, to reduce the farmers to day labourers, and the sons of noblemen and gentlemen to farmers.

These exaggerated declamations made a deep impression on the public mind. When the house met on the 28th to resume the consideration of the bill, Sir John Barnard entered into a full explanation of his scheme, and laboured with great address and ability to obviate these popular objections. He went over all the grounds of political expediency, and in the course of a very long and ingenious explanation, urged, that in every view of the subject, relating to the extension of commerce, both domestic and foreign, to the en-

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Sir John
Barnard's
speech.

method proposed will not enable the parliament to give immediate ease to his majesty's subjects, by taking off some of the taxes which are most burthenome to the poor, and especially to the manufacturers: For, by the first proposal, the same annual interest which is now paid, viz. 4 per cent. is to be continued for 47 years; and consequently the taxes by which that interest is raised must be continued for that term, which will give but small relief to the present generation. And in all the other cases, the annual interest must be augmented, instead of being reduced: for if the proprietors of £. 20,000,000 of the public debts could be supposed to accept any of these annuities upon the terms proposed, the annual interest must then be increased in the following manner, viz.

For 31 Years	£. 200,000 per Ann.
23½ Years	£. 400,000
19 Years	£. 600,000
16 Years	£. 800,000
13½ Years	£. 1,000,000
12 Years	£. 1,200,000

"Fourthly, I observe, That the other part of the scheme, which relates to annuities upon lives, is liable to the same objection: for if the proposed annuities are taken at a medium of 8½ per cent. and the lives are supposed at a medium to continue 18 years (which very nearly coincides with the rules laid down for finding the number of years due to any given life) then it will be evident, that a further interest of 4½ per cent. must be raised to pay

such annuities, which will more than double the present annual interest.

"Fifthly, It is to be observed, that this scheme is not calculated for the good of the whole, but, according to the old proverb, to rob Peter to pay Paul, or, to remove the burthen from one part of the community, and lay it upon another, and upon that part too which hath already contributed no less than six shillings and eight-pence in the pound towards lessening the public debts. I am unwilling to charge the author with an intention to oppress the proprietors of the public funds, though his scheme manifestly tends to it: but why does his tenderness lie all on one side? Is there no part of it due to those widows and orphans, who have no other way of subsistence, but the income of small fortunes in government securities? For my part, I cannot perceive the honesty or policy of easing one part of the community, by distressing another; neither can I apprehend any wisdom or justice in making invidious distinctions between the landed and monied interest, since it is in a great measure owing to those, who ventured their fortunes in the public funds, that the Protestant part of this nation have any lands or liberties left. I do therefore hope that their present interest will not be lessened; but if nothing else will serve, I am persuaded I can propose a way of doing it that will be the least injurious to them of any that can be thought of, which, if called upon, I am ready to publish."

couragement.

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couragement of industry, the increase of population, the augmentation of the manufactures, and the improvement of agriculture, this plan would be attended with the most extensive and beneficial consequences. He said, that even those public securities which bore an interest of three per cent. only, were sold at a premium in Change Alley: he was, therefore, persuaded, that all those who were willing to give a premium for a three per cent. security, would gladly lend their money to government for the same interest, should books of subscription be opened for that purpose, with an assurance, that no part of the principal should be paid off for fourteen years. He expatiated on the national advantages that would accrue from a reduction of interest. From a long series of calculations, he inferred, that in a very little time the interest upon all the South Sea annuities would be reduced from four to three per cent. without any danger to public credit, or breach of public faith; that then the produce of the sinking fund would amount to fourteen hundred thousand pounds per annum, to be applied only towards redeeming the capital of the several trading companies: he proved that this measure would bring every one of them so much within the power of parliament, that they would be glad to accept of three per cent. interest on any reasonable terms; in which case the sinking fund would rise to one million six hundred thousand pounds per annum. Then the parliament might venture to annihilate one half of it, by freeing the people from the taxes upon coals, candles, soap, leather, and other such impositions as lay heavy upon the poor labourers and manufacturers: the remaining part of the sinking fund might be applied towards the discharge of those annuities and public debts, which bore an interest of three per cent. only, and afterwards, towards diminishing the capitals of the several trading companies, till the term of fourteen years should be expired; then the sinking fund would again amount to above a million yearly, which would be sufficient for paying them off, and freeing the nation entirely from all its incumbrances*."

Indirectly
opposed by
Walpole.

Walpole, among others, replied to this statement, but his arguments were confined to shew that the time was improper for the reduction of interest†. He was fully convinced that the proposal, in the shape it was offered by Sir John Barnard, was neither expedient or practicable. It became necessary therefore either to amend or throw it out. To throw it out by direct opposition, was not in his power, as notwithstanding its increasing unpopularity without doors, it still seemed agreeable to the general sense of the house, and was warmly supported by many of the members who were personally attached

* Chandler. Smollett's History of England, vol. 2. p. 521.

† Chandler.

to him. His confidential friend, Mr. Howe, who, in consequence of the uniform support which he gave to his administration, was afterwards created lord Chedworth, had proposed the scheme in the warmest terms of approbation. He had said that the country gentlemen would be benefited by the reduction; that the landed interest required, and were intitled to relief, that the land had hitherto been loaded with all the burthens, while the funds had borne none; and that their necessities had arisen from the abundance of the stocks*. Under these circumstances, Walpole, apprehensive that it would be carried with all its imperfections, adopted indirect means of throwing it out. At the close of the debate, his friend Winnington proposed to extend the reduction to all the redeemable debts. He observed, that he would not enter into the question, whether a reduction of interest would tend to the advantage of the nation, or whether the natural interest of money lent on public security was below three per cent. But should both be resolved in the affirmative, according to the principles of the bill, he must condemn the injustice and partiality of confining the reduction to the South Sea annuities. He was of opinion, that it ought to be extended in its operation to all the public creditors. These, he concluded, were his sentiments, and if they were approved by the house, he should move for resolutions to redeem all public debts that were redeemable by law, and to enable the king to borrow money at three per cent. for that purpose.

These observations seemed to meet the general sentiments of the house, and Sir John Barnard could not venture to oppose them. He observed, however, that the proposal was intended to frustrate his scheme, by introducing such amendments as must render it abortive, according to the old proverb, "Grasp at all, and lose all." He added, that although government could borrow money at three per cent. sufficient to pay off so many proprietors of the South Sea annuities as were willing to accept that interest, because their united stock did not exceed twenty-four millions, yet it would be extremely difficult to obtain such a loan as would discharge the whole of the redeemable fund, which amounted to forty-four millions. But as the scheme, even thus amended, might be productive of signal advantage to the nation, he should not oppose it, and he hoped the honourable gentleman would move for such a resolution as he had just intimated. Two resolutions were accordingly moved for by Winnington. They contained in substance, "That all the public funds, redeemable by law, which carry an interest of

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Proposal extended.

* Heads of Mr. Howe's Speech; Parliamentary Memorandums. Orford Papers.

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March 30.

These resolutions being reported, and carried by a majority of 220 to 157, in which division Walpole appeared in the minority, Sir John Barnard, Wortley Montague, and the master of the rolls, were ordered to prepare a bill accordingly †.

Motion for
abolition of
taxes.

Sir John Barnard, however, had not sufficient discretion to be satisfied with this partial victory; instead of weakening the resistance to his favourite scheme, by making it as much as possible a great national object, he on the contrary united a numerous body of adversaries, lost the vantage ground on which he before stood, and reduced it to a mere party question. He followed up the report by moving, "that the house would, as soon as the interest of all the national redeemable debt should be reduced to £.3 per cent. per annum, take off some of the heavy taxes which oppressed the poor, and the manufacturer ‡."

His view in making this unprecedented motion, was to attach popularity to his bill; but it had a contrary effect, for it was proved to be fallacious, illusory, and irregular. It was fallacious, because it assumed as facts, statements that were not true; that the public imposts fell more heavily upon the poor in England, than in other countries, and implied, that the reduction of the interest from four to three per cent. would compensate for the loss of the revenue, if those taxes were abolished. It was illusory, because it held out a prospect of taking off the taxes several years before the reduction could be effected; and it was irregular, because it bound future parliaments to the adoption of a measure which might not at a future time be feasible. It was ably and unanswerably argued by the minister, and those who opposed it, that to agree to the resolution, would be exposing the public to unavoidable disappointment, "that it would be time enough to come to a resolution to abolish some taxes, when the scheme had taken effect, for if such a previous resolution should be adopted, and the scheme should afterwards prove altogether abortive, the whole world would laugh at their precipitancy."

* Chandler, vol. 9. p. 452.

† Tindal. Chandler. Journals.

‡ Journals.

In the speech which Sir John Barnard made in defence of this motion, he betrayed such a confusion of projects, and indistinctness of ideas, assumed so many principles which were untrue, and so violently transgressed the bounds of parliamentary engagement, that the motion was negatived, by 200 against 142, and the public clamour very much heightened.

Under these unfavourable circumstances, the bill, prepared on the basis of Winnington's resolutions, was presented to the house by Sir John Barnard, and it was read the first time.

On the 29th, the bill was read a second time, and a motion being made for recommitting it, it was no less resolutely supported than vigorously attacked. Several speakers on both sides had been heard before Walpole delivered his sentiments.

He began by denying the truth of an assertion, which had been assiduously disseminated, that Sir John Barnard had held private conferences with him, and settled the scheme then in agitation. He proceeded to review his own conduct during its progress; acknowledged that he had acquiesced in the committee, but that on the first reading, feeling some doubts on the propriety of the measure, he had desired time to weigh maturely its beneficial against its evil consequences. "But whatever doubts," he continued, "I might then entertain, deliberate reflection has removed them, and convinced me of its inefficiency.

"The measure is founded on plausible assumptions, that it is better to pay three than four per cent. and that it is desirable to discharge the debt of the nation. These positions are undoubtedly true; but the question is, whether the method proposed to effect them is just and adequate? We must take care not to confound public necessity with public utility. Public utility differs essentially from profit or benefit gained to the public; for when profit accrues to the public, at the expence of many individuals, it loses all claim to consideration under the title of public utility. This house, in carefully attending to their duty as guardians of the national purse, must not forget that they are trustees for the creditors. We must not assume a right to prejudice the public creditors, or to convert the right of redemption which we possess, into a right of reduction, to which we have no claim. Debts not originally subject to reduction, are, in that respect, in the situation of irredeemables, and the faith of parliament is equally pledged to prevent any reduction without the consent of the proprietors. If we advert to the time and manner in which these debts were created, every argument against the reduction of interest, acquires a great additional force. At that disastrous period, the creditors of the South Sea and East India com-

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1737.

Rejected.

Bill introduced.

April 22.

Walpole's speech.

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panies had a power to demand the whole amount of their bonds. Their forbearance was essentially necessary to the defence and well-being of the community, for, had they persisted in claiming their principal, the whole must have fallen on the landed interest, or the result must have been such as I dare not mention, or hardly think of. And is the service then rendered to the country, to be now repaid by a compulsory reduction of their dividends? I call it compulsory, for any reduction by terror, can only be described by that name. If they are to be so reduced, the pretence is, that it will ease the current service, or take off taxes; but that would be only to take the taxes off others, to be imposed on them, in the most cruel and insupportable manner. It would be equally just to take away one fourth from the income of every individual, or to deprive him of one fourth of his lands or stock in trade; or rather the injustice would be less in such case, because the national creditor is, by express contract, exempt from all public taxes and impositions.

“ Nor is it true that the interest proposed is equivalent to the value of money, for though money cannot be invested in the funds without an advance above three per cent. at par, yet all loans on real securities, on estates, or on personal securities, bear a much higher interest. The preference given to the funds, arises from various causes; from the facility of receiving interest, cheapness of transfer; and from none more than the faith placed in the national honour, which is bound to suffer no loss to fall on the public creditor. Stock, while the credit remains untarnished, is but another name for ready money bearing interest, a property which in no other case can attach to ready money; and if the confidence now placed in the guardians of the public honour is diminished, even that advantage will not in future tempt individuals to trust their money out of their own custody. No diminution of taxes, or other contingent advantage, can compensate for such a privation; nor is it to be compared to a repayment of the principal at any time, however inconvenient, for it is not to be supposed that any one would prefer a sudden and absolute privation of one fourth of his whole income, to the casual and distant resumption of 10 or 15 per cent. on his capital, not to be effected without an equivalent payment, which may be delayed by accident, or frustrated by necessity.

“ The injustice of the present plan appears in this; that it is calculated to mark out all the great companies, and to benefit the borrowers at the expence of the lenders. But this is not the whole extent of the evil. A double duty is incumbent on the legislature; to use their utmost exertions towards paying the national debt, and to avoid creating distresses and discontent.

content. Now the whole number of persons interested in the stock to be affected by the proposed measure, is about 23,000, of these, upwards of 6,000 are interested as executors, administrators, and trustees, and upwards of 17,000 are possessed only of sums not exceeding £. 1,000. The executors and trustees must necessarily be infinitely embarrassed, especially if the sums committed to them are small, in perfecting the purposes for which they are confided; and those who possess such small sums as do not amount to £. 1,000, must be much distressed by so unexpected and wanton a reduction of their income."

The minister, in the course of these observations, took an ample review of the bill, which he shewed to be unequal to the ends it was designed to answer. He proved that the alternatives of the proposition produced repugnant and discordant effects; and that the plan was destructive of the purposes, and inadequate in benefit to the sinking fund.

On this head, he should beg leave to take notice of a circumstance that personally alluded to him. Gentlemen had discussed, in the course of the debate, *the advantages which had been derived from the plan of reducing the national debt from six to five per cent. which he had the honour of proposing to the house.* They had conceived it impossible for him to resist a similar reduction from four to three per cent. without the grossest inconsistency. But he was free to declare, that he could oppose the present scheme without subjecting himself to that imputation. It became his duty, on the authority of the former scheme, to give his negative to this, because no two schemes ever differed more widely in their intention, effect, and consequences.

He then stated the difference between the present scheme, and that which he had proposed. This scheme, he observed, is compulsory, his was optional. On the former occasion, money was prepared; on this, it was yet to be raised. His scheme laid the foundation, this reverses the whole system of the sinking fund. His was founded upon converting numbers of years at higher rates, into perpetuities at lower rates. This plan establishes terms of years at higher rates, in lieu of perpetuities at lower rates, after an expiration of twenty years of the former terms. This was intended to lock up the sinking fund for several years, of which the shortest term was not less than twelve, and the longest forty-seven. During this time, all reduction of interest would be prevented, all abolition of taxes rendered impracticable, and a necessity imposed of laying fresh burthens in case of emergency. Whereas his had a contrary tendency; a million of the debt might be annually discharged, or some of the existing taxes might be abolished, or the imposi-

Period VI. tion of fresh taxes prevented, by applying the surplusses of the sinking fund
1734 to 1737. to the current service.

"The declared intention of the bill is, to give ease to the subject; and the title specifies *immediate* ease. But its tendency is calculated to violate this very principle, and to falsify the title, for no ease can be given, until the reduction has taken place, and that event is distant, uncertain, and precarious. In fact, the present disadvantages of the scheme proposed by the honourable gentleman, evidently appear from the affectation with which he expatiated on *his love to posterity*. For certain it is, that his scheme cannot benefit the present generation, but its salutary effects will principally be confined to those who are yet unborn *."

Barnard's
reply.

Sir John Barnard said in reply, "I am very much obliged to the honourable gentleman, Sir, and therefore, I thank him for vindicating me from the imputation of having had any private conversation with him, or of having ever had any concert with him, and if he is afraid lest people should suspect his having had a hand in the scheme I proposed to you, I shall be equally just to him, by declaring, I never had any private conversation with him about it, nor did I so much as ask his approbation or consent to what I was to offer; but as to the scheme as it now stands, every gentleman that hears me, knows it is very different from what I offered; and every one likewise knows, that the new model, which is the model we have now before us, if it was not offered by the honourable gentleman himself, it was at least offered by some of his friends; and what they proposed was agreed to by other gentlemen, in order that we might have their assistance in carrying it through. Therefore, the scheme now before you, cannot properly be called mine; and it is very remarkable, that all objections made to the bill, are only to those articles and clauses of it, which relate to the improvements and additions made to my scheme, by the honourable gentleman's friends †."

Bill rejected.

The house divided, and the question of committing the bill was negatived, by 249 against 134 ‡.

Walpole's
motives.

It is difficult, without farther documents on this subject than I possess, to ascertain

* The substance of this speech is taken from parliamentary minutes in the hand-writing of Sir Robert Walpole. Walpole Papers.

† Chandler, vol. 9. p. 479.

‡ I have dwelt thus particularly on the consideration of Sir John Barnard's scheme, because the accounts given by most writers, who have fallen under my observation, are superficial and inaccurate. Even Tindal is unusually

short and barren of information. Tindal, vol. 20. p. 348.

Smollett, excepting a good abstract of Sir John Barnard's speech, which I have adopted in the text, is extremely deficient. He says it produced other debates, and was at last postponed by dint of ministerial influence. The falsity of this account is evident. Smollett, vol. 2. p. 627.

ascertain all the motives which induced the minister to resist the reduction. It may be sufficient, perhaps, to attribute it to a full conviction, that the measure was highly and generally unpopular. He had relinquished his favourite excise scheme, notwithstanding the certainty of its beneficial tendency, solely on that account. It was not to be supposed that he would promote this scheme, of the good tendency of which he was not assured, and which in many respects was partial and unjust.

But in addition to this motive, I can suggest two others, which influenced his dissent. First, he foresaw, from the disputes with Spain, which then began to arise, that the nation might be involved in a war, and that government could borrow with greater facility at four per cent. than at three.

He was still more swayed by another motive, which he could not venture to disclose. He had already appropriated part of the surplus of the sinking fund to the current service of the year, and as the measure was extremely popular, he had resolved, in case of emergency, to alienate the whole. But his design would have been frustrated by this bill, which would have locked up the greatest part of the sinking fund for several years, and have rendered it necessary to impose new taxes for the purpose of supplying the incidental expences*.

An act of this session, which is commonly denominated the playhouse bill, has exposed the minister to no less obloquy, from subsequent writers, than his opposition to the reduction of interest.

Playhouse bill.

Those who thus load him with indiscriminate censure, and impute this act solely to his *despotic influence*, have not paid due attention to the history of the English stage, to the power of the lord chamberlain over the players and theatrical representations, and to the opinion of the most moderate and best informed magistrates at the period of passing this act, which has been so much calumniated, and so little understood.

It is needless to discuss the question concerning the necessity of fixing some bounds to the licentiousness of the stage. The necessity must be allowed, except by those who think it fitting to subject to public mockery,

Belsham observes, "A bill was, however, ordered upon the basis of Winnington's proposition, which being in the sequel warmly attacked, and faintly defended, was finally postponed to a distant day, by a motion of the minister." In this short account there are three errors. It was warmly attacked, but by no means faintly defended. It was not finally postponed to a distant day, but the second reading was only put off for seven days; and it was then *negatived*, but

not on the motion of the minister. Belsham, vol. 1. p. 380.

* A reduction of interest took place in 1749, upon a plan, which has been described as similar, though it is essentially different from the original scheme proposed by Sir John Barnard. It was finally carried, though not without great opposition, by the united influence of the minister (Pelham) and Sir John Barnard.

law,

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law, government, and religion, and to expose magistrates, judges, and kings, to the personalities of satire, buffoonery, and low mimicry. In all well regulated governments, the fact has been universally admitted, and wherever it has not been adopted, the most fatal consequences have followed.

Even the freest democracy which perhaps ever existed, that of Athens, after having experienced the effects of unrestrained licentiousness in their theatrical performances, found it necessary to remedy the evil, and to limit the stage within the boundaries of common decency and justice.

Power of the
lord cham-
berlain.

It appears from the history of the English stage, that no period ever existed when it was not subject to superintendence, when players were not licenced, and when plays were not reviewed and amended, allowed or rejected. Before the reign of Henry the Eighth, the power of superintending the king's hunting parties, the direction of the comedians, musicians, and other royal servants, appointed either for use or recreation, was exclusively vested in the lord chamberlain.

Master of
the Revels.

Under him, and subject to his controul, was an inferior officer, who exerted himself on particular occasions for the purpose of regulating pageants, public festivals, and masquerades. This man was called by the fanciful names of the *Abbot of Misrule*, or *Lord of Pastimes*. But in the reign of Henry the Eighth, this temporary office was rendered regular and permanent by letters patent, and called the office of *Master of the Revels* *.

Theatrical
regulations
under Eliza-
beth.

Under Elizabeth, some wise regulations, with the advice of Walsingham, and co-operation of Burleigh, were made for allowing the use, but correcting the abuse of the stage; particularly, when the earl of Leicester obtained the first general licence for his theatrical servants to act stage plays in any part of England, a proviso was added in the patent, enjoining that *all comedies, tragedies, interludes, and stage plays, should be examined and allowed by the master of the revels*. Thus that authority which was before confined to the pastimes of the court, was now extended to the theatrical exhibitions of the whole kingdom.

During her reign also, the privy council exercised an authority, legislative and executive, over the dramatic world. They opened and shut playhouses; gave and recalled licences; appointed the proper seasons when plays ought to be presented or withheld; and regulated the conduct of the lord mayor of London, and the vice-chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge, with regard to plays and players. The privy council gave Tilney, the master of the revels in 1589, two co-adjutors, a statesman and a divine, to assist him in reforming comedies and tragedies.

* Officium magistri jocorum, *revelorum* et *mascorum*.

These

These prudent regulations, and the wisdom with which they were exercised, were attended with the most beneficial effects. The master of the revels, by regulating the stage, and restraining the number of theatres, gave greater respectability to the profession of a player, and the genius of the drama expanded and soared to a greater height, although its limits were contracted and its flight circumscribed.

Had not these wise regulations taken place, Shakespeare might have confined to burlesque farces, and low buffoonery, those vast powers of invention and description which his own language can alone adequately delineate.

“ The poet’s eye in a fine frenzy rolling,
Glances from heav’n to earth, from earth to heav’n,
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name *.”

By the wise and temperate use which the master of the revels made of his power, his weight and influence increased, and he gradually appropriated to himself the greater part of that authority, which had belonged to the lord chamberlain. During the latter part of the reign of James the First and Charles the First, it was held by Sir Henry Herbert †, nearly allied to the earl of Pembroke, lord chamberlain, under whose prudent management the reputation and consequence of the office increased, and produced the most salutary effects, until his functions were wholly suspended, by the troubles and confusion of the civil wars, and the fanaticism of the republicans.

On the restoration of Charles the Second, the master of the revels endeavoured to re-assume his former authority, but met with insuperable opposition from the proprietors and managers of the king’s and duke’s companies, one of whom had obtained a fresh licence to act plays, the other a renewal of a former grant. In vain the master of the revels applied to the courts of justice for redress; in vain he appealed to the sovereign, or to the lord chamberlain; he was neither supported by the one, or countenanced by the other; his authority,

* *Midsummer Night’s Dream.*

† Brother to the eccentric lord Herbert, of Cherbury, and of George Herbert, rector of

Bemerton, known by the name of the divine Herbert.

though

Period VI. though not overthrown, was considerably shaken, and his regulations were
 1734 to 1737. combated and despised.

During this suspension of his power, the particular differences, pretensions, or complaints, were generally settled by the personal interference of the king and duke, or referred to the decision of the lord chamberlain. In consequence of this relaxation of authority, and the libertine character of the court, the theatre was disgraced by the grossest ribaldry and obscenity, and the best authors vied who should produce the most licentious comedies. Ladies could not venture to attend a new play without masks, then daily worn, and admitted into the pit, the side boxes, and the gallery.

On the death of Sir Henry Herbert, the mastership of the revels was conferred on Charles Killigrew, manager of the king's company. The union of these two functions increased the evil, and the smallest check was not imposed on the glaring immorality of the stage.

At the revolution, the power of the lord chamberlain over the theatre was revived without restriction. He opened and shut playhouses, imprisoned and licensed players, corrected and rejected plays. Under him the master of the revels seems to have recovered some part of his former power, and to have had his share in the revolutions of the theatre. He revised and sanctioned plays, and his aid greatly contributed to the celebrated conquest which Jeremy Collier, by the publication of his short view of the stage, obtained over the immorality of the drama. In this publication, the most profane and obscene passages in several modern plays, which had been written by Dryden, Vanbrugh, Wycherley, Congreve, and the most admired dramatic authors, were detected and exposed. The truth of his observations, which all the wit and talents of the authors who were deservedly chastised could not controvert, produced a surprising effect; a general outcry was raised against the licentiousness of the stage, and king William sent the following order to the playhouses: "His majesty being informed, that notwithstanding an order made in June 1697, by the earl of Sunderland, then lord chamberlain of the king's household, to prevent the profaneness and immorality of the stage, several plays have lately been acted, containing several expressions contrary to religion and good manners: And whereas the master of the revels hath represented, that, in contempt of the said order, the actors did neglect to leave out such profane and indecent expressions, as he had thought proper to be omitted: therefore, it is his majesty's pleasure, that they shall not hereafter presume to act any thing in any play, contrary to religion and good manners, as they shall answer at their utmost peril." At the same time, the master of the revels was commanded
 not

not to licence any plays containing irreligious or immoral expressions, and to give notice to the lord chamberlain, or in his absence to the vice-chamberlain, if the players presumed to act any thing which he had struck out *.

But this reformation did not continue long in its full force. As soon as the first awe and panic of the actors had subsided, the stage nearly relapsed into its former immorality, all attempts to reform it became the object of theatrical wit, and were ridiculed in plays, prologues, and epilogues. Although the new plays were usually more decent and moral, yet the old plays were frequently acted, without being freed from their exceptionable passages.

Either in consequence of these proceedings, or of some disputes which arose between the actors of the royal theatres, and produced the desertion of the principal performers from Drury Lane to the Haymarket, the nuisance of playhouses, and the conduct of the performers, became so flagrant, that a bill, in the twelfth year of queen Anne, included players, who acted without a legal settlement in the places where they performed, among vagrants, and subjected them to the same penalties as rogues and vagabonds. But before the beneficial effects of this act could have time to operate, the death of the queen produced a new revolution in the drama.

Soon after the accession of George the First, the power of the master of the revels, which had been considerably circumscribed, was almost annihilated; a new patent was injudiciously granted to Sir Richard Steele, Colley Cibber, and Booth, for acting plays without subjecting them to the licence or revision of any officer.

In consequence of this grant, the master of the revels was abridged of his power, and defrauded of his dues, and his emoluments were reduced to a small salary from the exchequer, to lodgings in Somerset House, and to occasional fees.

At the death of Charles Killigrew, the office, thus mutilated, was conferred on Charles Henry Lee, and the decline of his power was sufficiently shewn 1734. by the growing licentiousness of the stage, and the numerous pieces which offended equally against religion, decency, and common sense.

Although, in all the letters patent for acting plays since the time of Charles the First, no mention was made of the lord chamberlain, yet he was still considered as possessing an absolute, though an undefinable authority over the stage, which he had occasionally exercised. The performance of several theatrical pieces had been prevented, particularly Lucius Junius

* Tindal, vol. 14. p. 478.

Period VI. Brutus, a prologue of Dryden to the Prophets, Mary Queen of Scotland, and recently Polly, the sequel to the Beggar's Opera.

1734 to 1737.

But as this exercise of his power had been always attended with much unpopularity, it was seldom exerted. Numerous theatres were erected in different parts of the metropolis, in which the actors performed without licence or authority. To prevent this, several attempts were made to enforce the laws then existing. An actor, who performed on the theatre of the Haymarket, without licence, was taken from the stage, by the warrant of a justice of peace, and committed to Bridewell, as coming under the penalty of the vagrant act. The legality of the commitment was disputed; a trial ensued; it was decided, that the comedian being a housekeeper, and having a vote for electing members of parliament, did not come within the description of the said act; and he was discharged amidst the loud acclamations of the populace. The issue of this trial gave full scope to the licentiousness of the stage, and took away all hopes of restraining the number of playhouses.

From this representation of the state of the drama, it is evident, that some reformation was indispensably necessary. The minister himself had long seen that necessity. The obloquy which pursued him was not confined to the press; the stage was made the vehicle of the most malignant sarcasms, not expressed in the elevated tone of tragedy, or couched in sentiments and language perceptible only to men of refined understandings, but his person was brought on the stage, his actions maligned, his measures misrepresented and arraigned, and his conduct made the sport of the populace, in all the petulance of vulgar farce. He was unwilling, however, to make this a personal consideration, but rather a public and national question, in which the good of the law, constitution, religion, and morality, was intimately involved, and such an opportunity seemed to present itself, when Sir John Barnard brought in a bill "to restrain the number of houses for playing of interludes, and for the better regulating of common players of interludes."

March 5,
1735.

Bill for restraining the number of playhouses.

On his representing the mischiefs which theatres had done to the city of London, by corrupting youth, encouraging vice and debauchery, and greatly prejudicing trade, the proposal was at first received with contempt and ridicule, until it was seconded by Sandys, Pulteney, and warmly supported by the minister himself. It was observed by a member, in the course of the debate, that there were at that time not less than six theatres in London. The house being fully convinced of the necessity of the bill, leave was given to bring it in without a single dissenting voice. It

was

was accordingly, on the 3d of April presented, read the first time, and ordered to be printed; notwithstanding petitions against it from the proprietor of the theatre in Goodman's Fields, and from the master and comptroller of the revels. It was read a second time on the 14th of April.

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1737.

The minister conceived this to be a favourable opportunity of checking the daring abuse of theatrical representation, which had arrived to a most extravagant height. It was proposed to insert a clause, to ratify and confirm, if not enlarge the power of the lord chamberlain, in licensing plays, and at the same time insinuated to the house, that unless this addition was made, the king would not pass it. But Sir John Barnard strongly objected to this clause. He declared that the power of the lord chamberlain was already too great, and had been often wantonly exercised, particularly in the prohibition of *Polly*. He should therefore withdraw this bill, and wait for another opportunity of introducing it, rather than establish by law a power in a single officer so much under the direction of the crown, a power which might be exercised in an arbitrary manner, and consequently attended with mischievous effects.

The attempt of Sir John Barnard having thus failed, the immorality of the drama increased, and the most indecent, seditious, and blasphemous pieces were performed, and resorted to with incredible eagerness. Among those who principally supported this low ribaldry, was the celebrated Henry Fielding, who, though he never shone in the higher line of perfect comedy, wrote these dramatic satires in a style agreeable to the populace. One of his pieces, called *Pasquin*, which was acted in the theatre at the Haymarket, ridiculed, in the grossest terms, the three professions of divinity, law, and physic, and gave general offence to persons of morality. "Religion, laws, government, priests, judges, and ministers," observes Colley Cibber, "were laid flat at the feet of the Herculean satirist, this Drawcanfir in wit, who spared neither friend nor foe, who to make his poetical fame immortal, like another Erostrates, set fire to his stage, by writing up to an act of parliament to demolish it."

Licentious-
ness of the
stage.

This piece was peculiarly offensive to the minister, because it contained many personal allusions and invectives. But as he was not willing to employ the power of government in a mere temporary prohibition of this and other performances, which would have been extremely unpopular, and not attended with permanent effects, he wished to avail himself of the present flagrant abuse, to prevent future representations so disgraceful and indecorous.

In the course of the session, an opportunity offered, which he did not

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omit to seize. Giffard, the manager of Goodman's Fields theatre, brought to him a farce, called the Golden Rump, which had been proposed for exhibition; but it is uncertain whether the intentions of the manager were to request his advice on this occasion, or to extort a sum of money to prevent its representation.

The minister, however, paid the profits which might have accrued from the performance, and detained the copy. He then made extracts of the most exceptionable passages, abounding in profaneness, sedition, and blasphemy, and submitted them to several members of both parties, who were shocked at the extreme licentiousness of the piece, and promised their support to remedy the evil. With their advice, concurrence, and promise of co-operation, he read the several extracts to the house, and a general conviction prevailed, of the necessity of putting a check to the representation of such horrid effusions of treason and blasphemy. He acted, however, with his usual prudence on this occasion. He did not bring forward, as is generally supposed, an act for subjecting all plays to the licence of the lord chamberlain, and restraining the number of playhouses, but contrived to introduce it by amending the vagrant act.

Bill for licensing plays.

May 20,
1737.

The bill was called, "A bill to explain and amend so much of an act, made in the twelfth year of the reign of queen Anne, intituled, an act for reducing the laws relating to rogues, vagabonds, sturdy beggars, and vagrants, and sending them whither they ought to be sent, as relates to the common players of interludes *." Leave was accordingly given to bring it in, and Pelham, Dodington, Howe, the master of the rolls, the attorney and solicitor general, were ordered to prepare it. During its rapid progress through the house, certain amendments were made, and two clauses were added. The first, which occasioned so much obloquy, empowered the lord chamberlain to prohibit the representation of any theatrical performances, and compelled all persons to send copies of any new plays, parts added to old plays, prologues and epilogues, fourteen days before they were acted, and not to perform them, under forfeiture of £. 50, and of the licence of the house, if any such existed, in which the play was acted. The second, which is said to have been added at the instigation of Sir John Barnard, operated in restraining the number of playhouses, by enjoining, that no person should be authorised to act, except within the liberties of the city of Westminster, and where the king should reside †.

The

* Journals.

† 1. Every person who shall for hire, gain, or reward, act, represent, or perform, or cause

to be acted, represented, or performed, any interlude, tragedy, comedy, opera, play, farce, or other entertainment of the stage, or any part or

The bill is generally said to have been warmly opposed in both houses; but it is remarkable that no trace (excepting the speech of lord Chesterfield) of this opposition is to be found in the periodical publications of the times, which are filled with accounts of the other debates. It is also certain, that not a single petition * was presented against it, and not a single division appears in the journals of either house. Striking proofs, if any were still wanting, to shew the general opinion in favour of its necessity.

The dispatch with which it was carried through both houses, affords additional evidence that it scarcely met with any resistance. The bill was ordered to be brought in on the 20th of May, read the 24th, a second time on the 25th, and committed to the whole house; ordered to be reported, with amendments, on the 26th, reported on the 27th, all amendments but one agreed to, and the bill ordered to be engrossed; passed on the first of June, and Mr. Pelham ordered to carry it to the lords. It was read the first time on the same day, the second time on the 2d, after a debate, carried in

or parts therein, in case such person shall not have any legal settlement in the place where the same shall be acted, represented, or performed, without authority, by virtue of letters patent from his majesty, his heirs, successors, or predecessors, or without licence from the lord chamberlain of his majesty's household for the time being, shall be deemed a rogue and a vagabond, within the intent and meaning of the said recited act, and shall be liable and subject to all such penalties and punishments, and by such methods of conviction, as are inflicted on, or appointed by the said act for the punishment of rogues and vagabonds who shall be found wandering, &c.

2. Any person having or not having any legal settlement, who shall without such authority or licence, act, &c. for hire, &c. any interlude, &c. every such person shall, for every such offence, forfeit the sum of fifty pounds, &c.

3. No person shall for hire, &c. act, &c. &c. any new interlude, &c. or any part or parts therein, or any new act, scene, or other part added to any old interlude, &c. or any new prologue or epilogue, unless a true copy thereof be sent to the lord chamberlain of the king's household, &c. fourteen days at least before the acting, &c. together with an account of the playhouse or other place where the same shall be, &c. the time wherein the same shall be first acted, &c. signed by the master or manager, or one, &c. of such playhouse, &c.

It shall be lawful for the said lord chamberlain, as often as he shall think fit, to prohibit the acting, &c. any interlude, &c. or any act, &c. &c. thereof, or any prologue or epilogue; and in case any such persons shall for hire, &c. act, any, &c. &c. before a copy shall be sent as aforesaid, or shall for hire, &c. &c. contrary to such prohibition, every person so offending shall, for every such offence, forfeit the sum of fifty pounds, and every grant, &c. (in case there be any such) under which the said master, &c. set up or continued such playhouse, &c. shall cease.

4. That no person or persons shall be authorized by virtue of, &c. from his majesty, &c. or the lord chamberlain, to act, &c. any interlude, &c. in any part of Great Britain, except in the city of Westminster, and within the liberties thereof, and in such places where his majesty, &c. shall reside, and during such residence only.

5. If any interlude, &c. shall be acted, &c. in any house or place, where wine or other liquors shall be sold, the same shall be deemed to be acted, &c. for gain, &c. Statutes at large, 17 G. 2. c. 28.

* Sir John Hawkins, in his Life of Johnson, asserts, that the manager of Goodman's Fields presented a petition against it, and was heard by counsel, but this petition was presented against Sir John Barnard's bill in 1735.

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the affirmative; the third time on the 6th, returned to the commons on the 8th, without any amendments, and received the royal assent on the 21st.

It is most probable that lord Chesterfield alone spoke against the bill, and that his speech, so deservedly admired, has been repeated by subsequent writers who copy each other, until a violent opposition to the measure has been supposed, which never existed.

Chesterfield did not confine his exertions to the house, but wrote against the new act, in a paper called *Common Sense*; his arguments have little to recommend them, at a time when the propriety and utility of the measure against which they were directed, is generally conceded. The fatal evils which were predicted as the certain consequences of this bill, perpetual slavery and the introduction of absolute authority, have not followed; the good effects which were expected from it, have been confirmed by never failing experience. While it suppressed the licentiousness, it has not destroyed the spirit of the drama; wit has not appeared less lovely and attracting, in promoting virtue and curbing vice with decency, than in recommending treason and obscenity; nor are the shafts of ridicule rendered useless, because, while they have preserved the power to do good, they are divested of the power to do mischief. "The facts, which have been detailed, evince, with sufficient conviction, that this act of parliament merely restored to the lord chamberlain, the ancient authority which he possessed before the appointment of the master of the revels; armed him with legal power, in the place of customary privilege; and enabled him to execute, by warrantable means, the useful, but invidious trusts, which experience had long required, and policy at length conferred *."

* Journals of the Lords and Commons. Chandler, for 1735. Lords' Debates, 1737. Colley Cibber's Apology. Jeremy Collier's View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage. Tindal, vol. 20, p. 350. Oldmixon, vol. 3. p. 192. Introduction to Biographia Dramatica. Gentleman's and Lon-

don Magazine, 1737. Maty's Life of Chesterfield. Hawkins's Life of Johnson, p. 75. Smollett, vol. 3. p. 525. Burn's Justice, article Players. Chalmers's Apology for the Believers of the Shakspeare MSS. p. 471 to 543; to whose elaborate researches on this subject I have been principally indebted.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-EIGHTH:

1737.

Origin and Progress of the Misunderstanding between the King and Prince of Wales.—Application to Parliament.—Conduct of Walpole—of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke—of Opposition.

THIS year was marked by two domestic events, which proved highly prejudicial to the influence of Sir Robert Walpole, and greatly contributed to hasten the close of his administration; the public opposition of the prince of Wales, and the death of queen Caroline.

Frederick Louis, prince of Wales, was born in 1707, and continued at Hanover until he had attained the twenty-first year of his age.

George the Second had found, from his own experience, the embarrassments to which government might be exposed from the opposition of the heir apparent, and dreaded the arrival of a son who might irritate the state of parties, and increase the ferment arising in the kingdom against the measures of the cabinet. He had from time to time deferred his removal from Hanover, and did not send for him to England, until a concurrence of circumstances rendered it impolitic to permit his longer residence on the continent.

Causes of the
misunder-
standing.

Clamours were justly raised in England, that the heir apparent had received a foreign education, and was detained abroad, as if to keep alive an attachment to Hanover, in preference to Great Britain. The ministers at length ventured to remonstrate with the king on the subject, and the privy council formally represented the propriety of his residence in England. The king, however, still hesitated, when an event occurred, which decided his choice, and induced him to accelerate the prince's departure from Germany.

A long negotiation had taken place between the houses of Brunswick and Brandenburg, for a double marriage between the prince of Wales and the princess royal of Prussia, and the prince royal of Prussia and the princess Amelia. This negotiation had commenced in the reign of George the First, and was eagerly promoted by his daughter Sophia Dorothy, who had espoused Frederick William, king of Prussia. Both parties seemed to have desired this union with equal anxiety; but the capricious and brutal temper of Frederick William, and his sudden secession from the treaty of Hanover,

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Hanover, had so highly offended George the First, that he ceased to favour the proposed intermarriages. Still farther obstacles were thrown in their way at the accession of George the Second. The two kings, from their early years, had formed a violent antipathy to each other. The system of politics adopted by England increased this misunderstanding. Frederick William had been lured by the Emperor to join the allies of Vienna, in opposition to those of Hanover, and his recruiting officers frequently made illegal enrolments on the Hanoverian territories.

In vain the queen of Prussia endeavoured to reconcile her husband and brother, and to promote the conclusion of the family union, which she so earnestly desired. The antipathy of the two monarchs increased instead of abating; and the king of Prussia was endeavouring to arrange another alliance for his son and daughter, which both they and his queen highly deprecated.

During the progress of this affair, the prince had formed an attachment to the princess of Prussia, and by the secret information of his aunt, the queen of Prussia, was apprized that her daughter felt an equal affection for him.

The prince was now twenty-one; his passion was inflamed by opposition, and being filled with apprehensions of losing the object of his affection, he adopted an expedient which proved the ardour of his attachment. He sent La Mothe, a Hanoverian officer, to Berlin, who obtained a private audience of the queen, in which he told her that he was commanded by the prince to declare his resolution of repairing incognito to Berlin, and secretly espousing her daughter, if the king and queen of Prussia would sanction this step with their approbation. At the same time he entreated the queen that it should be communicated to no one but the king. The queen received the message with a transport of joy, approved the design, and promised to keep the secret inviolable. The next morning, however, she disclosed it to Dubourgeay, the English envoy, observing, that she believed him to be so much her friend as to partake of her satisfaction. Dubourgeay expressed his concern that so important a secret should be confided to him, and declared it his duty to send immediate information to the king of England. The queen, conscious of the error which she had unwarily committed, conjured him not to betray her confidence, but he persisted in his resolution; and a messenger was immediately dispatched*. The queen was greatly embarrassed at this unexpected incident, but trusted that the affair might be concluded before the return of

* Polnitz, Histoire des quatre derniers Souverains de la Maison de Brandebourg Royale de Prusse, tom. 2. p. 182-184.

the messenger from England, and so sanguine were their hopes of success, that the king of Prussia came from his hunting seat to Berlin, expecting the daily arrival of the intended bridegroom.

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But while they were indulging these hopes, information was received that the prince had been sent for to England. George the Second, on the intelligence from Dubourgay, dispatched colonel Launay to Hanover for that purpose. The prince received these commands with respect, and instantly obeyed them. At the conclusion of a ball, he set out from Hanover, accompanied only by Launay and a single domestic, traversed Germany and Holland as a private gentleman, embarked at Helvetfluis, and arrived at St. James's, where he was coldly received by his father.

The prince's arrival.

For some time after his arrival in England, the novelty of his situation, his little acquaintance with the language, his total ignorance of the constitution and manners of the country, and the dread which he seems to have entertained of his father's indignation, kept him in due submission, and prevented him from openly testifying his dissatisfaction. But as he increased in years, and became conscious of his dignified station, the estrangement of his father, and the restraint in which he was kept, naturally disgusted a young prince of high spirit, and increasing popularity, and the resentment which he had conceived against his parents, excited an antipathy to the minister, in whom they had placed implicit confidence. As he had a taste for the arts, and a fondness for literary pursuits, he sought the society of persons who were most conspicuous for their talents and knowledge. He was thrown into the company of Carteret, Chesterfield, Pulteney, Cobham, and Sir William Wyndham, who were considered as the leading characters for wit, talents, and urbanity.

Courtied by opposition.

His house became the rendezvous of young men of the highest expectations, Pitt, Lyttleton, and the Grenvilles, whom he afterwards took into his household, and made his associates. The usual topic of conversation in select society, was abuse of the minister, and condemnation of his measures, urged with all the keenness of wit, and powers of eloquence. The prince found the men whose reputation was most eminent in literature, particularly Swift, Pope, and Thomson, adverse to Walpole, who was the object of their private and public satire.

But the person who principally contributed to increase his resentment against the king, and to foment his aversion to the minister, was Bolingbroke, who was characterised by the first poets of the age, as the "all accomplished St. John, the muse's friend." The prince was fascinated with his conversation and manners. His confident assertions, and popular declamations, his

affected

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affected zeal to reconcile all ranks and descriptions, the energy with which he decried the baneful spirit of party, and his plausible theories of a perfect government, without influence or corruption, acting by prerogative, were calculated to dazzle and captivate a young prince of high spirit and sanguine disposition, and induce him to believe that the minister was forming a systematic plan to overthrow the constitution, and that the cause of opposition was that of honour and liberty.

His peremptory demands.

So early as 1734, the misunderstanding between the father and son had increased to a very alarming degree, and the prince, encouraged by the opposition, took a very injudicious step, which was calculated to provoke the king, and occasion an immediate and open rupture. He repaired to the anti-chamber, and without any previous arrangement, requested an immediate audience. The king delayed admitting him till he had sent for Sir Robert Walpole, on whose arrival, he expressed his indignation against his son, and would have proceeded to instant extremities, had not the minister contrived to calm his resentment. He strongly inculcated moderation, and persuaded the king to hear with complacency what he wished to communicate.

On being admitted, the prince made three requests, in a tone and manner which indicated a spirit of perseverance. The first was, to serve a campaign on the Rhine in the Imperial army; the second related to the augmentation of his revenue, at the same time insinuating, that he was in debt; the third was, his settlement by a suitable marriage. To the first and third points, the king made no answer; in regard to the second, he shewed an inclination to comply, if the prince would behave with due respect to the queen.

The king had suppressed the emotions of his anger on these demands of his son; but his resentment broke out with redoubled violence, when rumours were circulated, that the prince would apply to parliament for an augmentation of his revenue. The queen exerted all her efforts to soften the king's indignation, and the minister used every argument which policy suggested to incline him to moderation, and to induce him not to drive the prince wholly into the arms of opposition. These exertions had a temporary effect*. The rupture was suspended, and the hopes of opposition were disappointed.

Marries the
princess of
Saxe Gotha.

The passion which the prince had entertained for the princess Frederica, being thwarted by his parents, preyed upon his mind and increased his dis-

* Lettre de Monf. de Lofs à Monf. de Brühl, sans date; de Monf. John à Monf. Von Hagen, 16 de Juillet 1734. Correspondence.

gust, and when the proposal of another union was imparted to him, he remonstrated with great marks of offended sensibility, and expressed his repugnance to espouse a princess whom he had not seen, instead of one whom he had seen and approved. When the arrangement was made for his marriage with Augusta, princess of Saxe Gotha, the prince of Wales sent for baron Borck, the Prussian minister, and complained, with much indignation, that the king his father compelled him to renounce all hopes of espousing a Prussian princess. He requested him to lay his grief before the king his master, and to assure him that he was determined to have resisted all compulsion, and was only induced to agree to the alliance with the princess of Saxe Gotha, on being informed by his mother, that the king of Prussia had refused to give him his daughter in marriage. He expressed his heartfelt regret that he was not permitted to have the honour of forming an union with a family which he loved more than his own, and to which, from his earliest infancy, all his desires had been directed; he hoped, nevertheless, that the king would not withdraw his favour and friendship. He testified his concern, that he was to be connected with a house from which he could not expect that support, which he should have found in the king of Prussia, and lamented his hard fate in being condemned to remain under the severe controul of the queen his mother. He concluded by observing, that he must submit to his destiny, that he could not see, without grief, the king of England disdaining the friendship of a great monarch, without which the ruin of his house must infallibly ensue*. The letter, in which Borck gave an account of this indiscreet conference to his master, fell into the hands of the king, and greatly irritated his inflammable temper.

On the 27th of April 1736, the prince of Wales espoused the princess of Saxe Gotha, in whose beauty, accomplishments, and virtues, he forgot his former passion. But the marriage did not remove the unfortunate misunderstanding between the father and son, it rather had a contrary tendency. The increased expences of the prince's household, without an adequate increase of income, rendered his situation still more irksome. His revenue, although enlarged from £.36,000 to £.50,000, with the emoluments of the duchy of Cornwall, did not amount to £.60,000, a sum the prince and his friends deemed insufficient to support the dignity of his station. It became matter of public animadversion, that out of a civil list of £.800,000, he re-

* Letter from Borck to the king of Prussia, December 23, 1735. Orford Papers.

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1734 to 1737.

ceived only £.50,000 a year, although the king, when prince of Wales, received £.100,000 out of a civil list of only £.700,000. But while this was industriously circulated, it was not considered, that George the Second, when prince of Wales, had a large family, and that he had several younger children, for whom he was to make a provision out of the civil list, which was not the case of George the First.

The marriage of the heir apparent greatly increased his popularity. The affability of his manners, the courtesy of his deportment, were contrasted with the phlegmatic reserve of George the Second. His protection of letters, his fondness for the polite arts, and his rising merits became the favourite theme of popular applause, and of parliamentary declamation among the members of opposition.

April 29.

It is remarkable, that the address of congratulation to the king, on the nuptials of the prince of Wales with the princess of Saxe Gotha was moved by Pulteney, and that the principal speakers in the prince's praise, were those who uniformly opposed the measures of government. It was on this memorable occasion, that William Pitt made his maiden speech, in a strain of declamation, which a contemporary historian describes as not inferior to the great models of antiquity, "it being more ornamented than Demosthenes, and less diffuse than Cicero *." Both he and his friend Lyttleton, who also first spoke on the same occasion, described the prince as a most dutiful son; descanted on his filial obedience and respectful submission to the will of his royal parents, and expatiated, with ostentatious energy, on his generous love of liberty, and his just reverence for the British constitution. In affecting to praise the king, for having gratified the impatient wishes of a loyal people, they gave the prior merit to the prince, for having requested a marriage so necessary to the public good, and ascribed only a secondary merit to the king for granting this request.

The manner in which this debate † was conducted, the warm panegyric bestowed on the prince, the cold praises given to the king, and the acrimonious censures of the minister, gave great offence, and tended still farther to widen the breach.

Joins opposi-
tion.

At length the misunderstanding arose to so great a height, that the prince threw himself into the arms of opposition. Bolingbroke, who had

* Tindal,

† Chandler, vol. 9. p. 222.

long advised the most violent proceedings, now laid down a systematic plan of proceeding to be followed by the prince, the first step of which was an emancipation from all dependence on the crown, by the acquisition of a permanent allowance of £. 100,000 per annum, which the king should be compelled to grant, at the remonstrance, and under the guaranty of parliament.

From the time that this scheme was first suggested by Bolingbroke, and which had been unadvisedly insinuated to the king, in 1734, before it was maturely weighed, the prince seems to have persisted in his resolution of appealing to parliament. Soon after his marriage, he mentioned his intention to the queen. The queen, perceiving that any advice would be ineffectual, affected to consider it as an idle and chimerical scheme; she treated it as a jest, and declared that there was not the least prospect of success. But her remonstrance had no effect. Urged on by Bolingbroke, whose last advice, before his retreat into France, was to pursue unremittingly this one favourite object, the prince at length determined to lay his case before parliament. He accordingly applied to the most respectable member of opposition, without any previous intimation, not with a view of asking advice, but of demanding support. Pulteney, though surprised at the unexpected request, declared a hearty inclination on his own part to promote the measure, but added, that he must consult his friends. Finding, however, the prince determined to persevere, he engaged for the unanimous consent of his particular friends, and offered to make the motion himself. Sir John Barnard promised his support, and Sir William Wyndham answered for the Tories; observing, that they had long desired an opportunity of shewing their regard and attachment to the prince. He also declared, that all his party were anxious to prove by their zeal, the falsity of the reproaches cast against them, that they were Jacobites, and to shew that they were misrepresented under that name.

Requires an increased allowance.

Dodington, afterwards lord Melcombe, was the first person connected with government, to whom the prince imparted his design, and to him it was declared only on the 7th of February. Dodington gave a striking proof of firmness and integrity, by declining to support a scheme pregnant with so many evils, and made strong and sensible remonstrances to induce the prince not to press any farther a measure which must render all who voted desperate either with the possessor of, or successor to the crown; but all his efforts were ineffectual*.

* Dodington's Diary.

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1734 to 1737.

No information was conveyed to the king, and the minister did not receive the least intimation of the business, or even suspect it, until the 13th of February. He was never before engaged in any transaction which gave him more concern or greater embarrassment. He was aware that £50,000 a year was inadequate to the dignified station of the heir apparent, and yet convinced that the king, incensed as he was against his son, could not be persuaded to increase that allowance. He was not however intimidated by a dread of offending the heir apparent, who might one day become his master, and did not shrink from his duty to his sovereign and to his country; but resolved to support the king in his just prerogative, and to oppose a measure which he considered as no less unconstitutional than disrespectful. He lamented, however, that the king had imprudently delayed to make the prince a permanent allowance of £50,000 a year, in the same manner as George the First had granted his allowance when prince of Wales, and that he had not settled a jointure on the princess. Walpole was not ignorant that the prince derived from these circumstances just cause of complaint, and that until that was removed, the opposition would have great advantage in the argument. In consequence of these sentiments, he used all his efforts to obtain a concession of these points, and finally conquered the repugnance of the king.

Proceedings
in the cabi-
net.
Feb. 19.

But the ungracious manner in which this was offered, widened rather than repaired the breach. The minister summoned a meeting at his own house, at which were present, the dukes of Newcastle, Grafton, and Devonshire, the earl of Scarborough, Horace Walpole, and lord Hardwicke, recently nominated lord chancellor, on the death of lord Talbot*. Walpole informed them, that he had, though not without the greatest difficulty, prevailed on the king to render the prince's allowance independent, and to settle the princess's jointure, and that his majesty had been pleased to give him authority to announce to the house of commons, when the motion was made, his consent to both these points. The chancellor objected, that if this declaration should be first made in the house of commons, without properly acquainting the prince, or his treasurer, it would have the appearance of an intended surprise. He added, that the friends of the royal family might think themselves ill used, if they were reduced to so great a difficulty as that of voting in a dispute between the king and the prince, when perhaps such previous information as he recommended might have prevented the motion.

* Lord Hardwicke has left a circumstantial narrative of this important transaction, from which I have selected the most interesting particulars. Hardwicke Papers.

To this sensible representation, the minister replied, that it was in vain to imagine the king could be reduced to so low an act of submission, as to permit any private communication of this kind, after the steps the prince had already taken. The suggestion, however, of the chancellor made a due impression, and Walpole persuaded the king to send a message to the prince, by some of the lords of the cabinet council.

Chapter 48.

1737.

Accordingly, on the day which lord Hardwicke received the great seal, while he was waiting in the antichamber with the dukes of Newcastle and Argyle, the earl of Wilmington, and other lords of the council, Sir Robert Walpole came out of the king's chamber in a great hurry, holding a paper in his hand. Calling all the lords of the cabinet to the upper end of the room, he then read to them a draught of a message, in his own hand writing, and acquainted them, that it was the king's pleasure, that it should be immediately carried to the prince by the lord chancellor, lord president, lord steward, and lord chamberlain.

Feb. 21.

The king's
message.

The draught was not fairly transcribed, and several of the lords complained, that the whole business was transacted with such precipitation, that sufficient leisure was not allowed to consider the terms of the message. The time pressed extremely, and the place was highly improper for such momentous consultation. For the company which assembled to attend the levee filled the room, and could not avoid hearing many of the things which passed in the course of conversation. The chancellor, however, ventured to object to the expressions, "*the undutiful measures which his majesty is informed your royal highness intends to pursue*;" but it was replied by the minister, that the king insisted on the word *undutiful*, and that it was with great difficulty he was induced not to add severer epithets. The chancellor, however, persisting in his objection, the word *intends*, was changed for *hath been advised to pursue*.

The chancellor took Walpole aside, and expostulated with him on the hardship of making such a disagreeable errand the first act of his office. The minister answered, that he had hinted this to the king, *as far as he durst venture in so nice a case*, but the king prevented all farther discussion, by exclaiming, *my chancellor shall go*.

The expostulations of the chancellor, however, produced a variation in point of form; instead of only four officers of the crown, the whole cabinet council was ordered to attend with the message. It then growing late, Sir Robert Walpole acquainted them that business of consequence was expected in the house of commons, that he and Sir Charles Wager must attend, and they

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they both went away, leaving the foul draught of the message. Lord Ilay, under a pretence of attending the house of lords, also retired.

When the ceremony of giving the great seal was over, the remaining * lords of the cabinet deliberated in the council chamber on the mode of executing their charge. The message was not yet copied, and a rumour was circulated, that the prince was going to the house of commons; the lord steward and the lord chamberlain were deputed to inform him, that the lords of the cabinet were ordered to attend with a message from the king, and requested to know where he would receive it. He answered, in his own apartment. As soon as the fair copy was compared with the draught, the lords went to the prince, and being shewn into the levee room, the chancellor kissed his hand, on being appointed to his high office, and received his congratulations. The door being then closed, he read the message over audibly and distinctly, as follows :

“ His majesty has commanded us to acquaint your royal highness, in his name, that upon your royal highness's marriage, he immediately took into his royal consideration the settling a proper jointure upon the princess of Wales; but his sudden going abroad, and his late indisposition since his return, had hitherto delayed the execution of these his gracious intentions; from which short delay his majesty did not apprehend any inconveniences could arise, especially since no application had, in any manner, been made to him upon this subject by your royal highness : and that his majesty hath now given orders for settling a jointure upon the princess of Wales, as far as he is enabled by law, suitable to her high rank and dignity, which he will, in proper time, lay before his parliament, in order to be rendered certain and effectual, for the benefit of her royal highness.

“ The king has further commanded us to acquaint your royal highness, that although your royal highness has not thought fit, by any application to his majesty, to desire, that your allowance of £. 50,000 per annum, which is now paid by monthly payments, at the choice of your royal highness, preferably to quarterly payments, might, by his majesty's further grace and favour, be rendered less precarious, his majesty, to prevent the bad consequences which he apprehends may follow, from the undutiful measures, which his majesty is informed, your royal highness has been advised to pursue, will grant to your royal highness, for his majesty's life, the said £. 50,000 per annum, to

* The lord chancellor, the earl of Wilmington, the dukes of Dorset and Grafton, the duke of Richmond, master of the horse, the duke of Argyle, commander in chief, the duke

of Newcastle, the earl of Pembroke, groom of the stole, the earl of Scarborough, and lord Harrington.

be issuing out of his majesty's civil list revenues, over and above your royal highness's revenues arising from the duchy of Cornwall, which his majesty thinks a very competent allowance, considering his numerous issue, and the great expences which do, and must necessarily attend an honourable provision for his whole royal family."

Chapter 48.

1737.

The chancellor having concluded, there was a short pause, and a profound silence ensued. The prince looking about him, said, my lords, "Am I to return an immediate answer?" to which the chancellor replying, "if your royal highness pleases," the prince then delivered a verbal message to the following import:

The prince's answer.

"He desired the lords to lay him, with all humility, at his majesty's feet; and to assure his majesty that he had, and ever should retain, the utmost duty for his royal person; that he was very thankful for any instance of his majesty's goodness to him, or the princess, and for his majesty's gracious intention for settling a jointure upon her royal highness; but that, as to the message, the affair was now out of his hands, and therefore he could give no answer to it." After which, he used many dutiful expressions towards the king, and then added, *Indeed, my lords, it is in other hands, I am sorry for it*, or to that effect. He concluded, with earnestly desiring the lords to represent his answer to his majesty in the most respectful and dutiful manner*."

When this answer was reported to the king in the evening, by the lords, he looked displeased, but made no reply.

The situation of the minister was rendered more embarrassing at this particular period, from the ill health of the king, who was at that time so indisposed as to give real apprehension, that he could not long survive. Hence Bolingbroke, in a letter† to Sir William Wyndham, expresses his astonishment at Walpole's imprudence, in offending the heir apparent, who was likely to become his master, and the duchess of Marlborough thought his conduct no less incomprehensible‡. This circumstance had given to opposition a great accession of strength, but had no effect on the conduct of Walpole.

Situation of the minister.

On the 22d, Pulteney made his motion for an address, requesting the king to settle £. 100,000 a year on the prince of Wales, and the same jointure on the princess as the queen had when she was princess of Wales, assuring the king, that the house would enable him effectually to fulfil the same.

Motion in the house of commons.

* Chandler, vol. 9, p. 302, 303.

† Correspondence, Feb. 3, 1738. Period VII.

‡ [Feb. 6. 1736.] Heard this day, from a pretty good hand, that his majesty has been worse than they cared to own, but upon re-

medies they applied, his fever lessened, and was better. However, the physicians say, that if he does get over this illness, he cannot live a twelvemonth. *Opinions of the Duchess of Marlborough*, p. 36.

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The great points which Pulteney, and those who supported the motion, laboured to prove, were, that the prince had a claim to the proposed allowance, founded on equity and good policy, and a legal right, founded on law and precedent, and that the revenue of the civil list had been granted to George the First, and afterwards augmented under George the Second, on the express, or at least implied, condition, that, out of that revenue, the sum of £. 100,000 should be reserved for the prince of Wales, as a permanent and independent establishment, which the king had it not in his power to withhold. Pulteney supported the principles on which the motion was founded with great ability, and with a long series of historical references to heirs apparent and presumptive to the crown, who, he maintained, had received an independent and permanent allowance. He concluded by anticipating several cogent objections to the proposed address, arising from the impropriety and indecency of interposing between the king and the prince, between the father and the son, and of interfering with the prerogative of the crown.

The minister in reply, began by observing, that he never rose to speak upon any subject with a deeper concern, and a greater reluctance, than he did on the present important affair. He expressed the concern and embarrassment under which most members of that house must lie, in giving their votes or opinion; if they declared in favour of the motion, they must seem to injure the royal father, their sovereign, or by declining the motion, seem to injure the royal son, and apparent heir to the crown. But he would declare his sentiments with freedom, because, from his *personal* knowledge of the two great characters, he was satisfied that neither of them would think himself injured, because any gentleman gave his opinion or vote freely in parliament; and he was convinced that the prince of Wales had so much wisdom, and such a true sense of filial duty, that he would never consider as a favour bestowed on him, what had the least tendency towards offering an indignity to his father.

He supported the prerogative of the crown, and the right of the king to dispose of his civil revenues, without the interference of parliament, and to suffer no controul in the management of his own family. In the course of his speech, he communicated the substance of the message which had been sent by the king to the prince, and declared that £. 50,000 a year, exclusive of the revenues arising from the duchy of Cornwall, was a competent allowance, and as much as the king could afford out of the civil list. He expatiated on the impropriety of parliament's interposing between

tween the father and son, deprecated the attempt to make a breach between them, entered into an historical examination of the several precedents mentioned by Pulteney, and denied that any foundation for such a parliamentary interposition could be found, except that single precedent under Henry the Sixth, whose reign was so weak, that the parliament found it necessary to assume several rights and privileges, to which they were not properly entitled. He declared, that the prince had neither a claim from equity or good policy, and still less a right, founded on law or precedent, and he mentioned that the revenues of the civil list had been granted unconditionally to the king, without the most distant allusion to a stipulation, that £.100,000 per annum should be paid to the prince of Wales.

The reasons urged by Walpole, in contradiction to those advanced by opposition, sufficiently proved, to all dispassionate persons, that the motion was not founded on law, good policy, or precedent, and were not invalidated by the reply of Pulteney, in summing up the arguments on both sides. But a confident and plausible assertion, advanced by a supporter of the motion, made a deep impression on the house, and seemed to vindicate the proceedings of the prince, and to arraign the conduct of the king.

“ By the regulation and settlement of the prince's household, as made some time since by his majesty himself, the yearly expence comes to £.63,000, without allowing one shilling to his royal highness for acts of charity and generosity. By the message now before us, it is proposed to settle upon him only £.50,000 a year, and yet from this sum we must deduct the land tax, which, at two shillings in the pound, amounts to £.5,000 a year, we must likewise deduct the sixpenny duty to the civil list lottery, which amounts to £.1,250 a year, and we must also deduct the fees payable at the exchequer, which amount to about £.750 a year more, all these deductions amount to £.7,000 a year, and reduce the £.50,000, proposed to be settled upon him by the message, to £.43,000 a year. Now as his royal highness has no other estate but the duchy of Cornwall, which cannot be reckoned, at the most, above £.9,000, his whole yearly revenue can amount but to £.52,000, and yet the yearly expence of his household, according to his majesty's own regulation, is to amount to £.63,000, without allowing his royal highness one shilling for the indulgence of that generous and charitable disposition with which he is known to be endued in a very eminent degree. Suppose then we allow him but £.10,000 a year for the indulgence of that laudable disposition, his whole yearly expence, by his majesty's own acknowledgment, must then amount to £.73,000, and his yearly income, according to this message, can amount to no more than £.52,000, is this, Sir, shewing any respect to his merit? Is this providing for his generosity? Is it not reducing him to a real want,

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even with respect to his necessities, and consequently, to an unavoidable dependance, and a vile pecuniary dependance too, upon his father's ministers and servants? I confess, Sir, when I first heard this motion made, I was wavering a good deal in my opinion; but this message has confirmed me: I now see, that without the interposition of parliament, his royal highness the prince of Wales, the heir apparent to our crown, must be reduced to the greatest straits, the most insufferable hardships *."

Full credit was, at the time, given to this statement, as well because it was ostentatiously displayed by two of the prince's servants during the debate, as because the minister, to prevent great heats and animosities, made no immediate answer, and several persons were induced by this representation to vote in favour of the motion, which was negatived by a majority of only 234 against 204 †.

This small majority of 30 would have been reduced to a minority, had Sir William Wyndham been able to fulfil the promise of support, which he made to the prince in the name of his party. But forty-five Tories considered the interference of parliament as hostile to the principles of the British constitution, highly democratic, and such a dangerous innovation, that they quitted the house in a body before the division; an act highly honourable to those who refused to sacrifice their principles to their party.

In the lords.

On the 23d, the same motion was made in the house of peers by lord Carteret, and a similar debate ensued. It was negatived by a large majority of 103 against 40, and a protest was inserted only by fourteen peers ‡.

Mis-statement of opposition.

But although this unconstitutional proposition was thus thrown out in parliament, yet the smallness of the majority in the lower house, proved the difficulties under which the minister laboured. His cause was highly unpopular. The opposition introduced the question in every shape and form which was most likely to attract the public attention, and in the periodical papers and pamphlets, written with all the address and subtlety which the talents of the great leaders of the minority could supply. Among other pamphlets which were circulated with zeal, and read with avidity, was one intitled, "A Letter from a Member of Parliament to his Friend in the Country, on the Motion for addressing the King to settle £. 100,000 per Annum on his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales." This work was written with such an air of candour, and plausibility of argument, and yet contained so much bitterness and acrimony, that the minister himself revised the answer, which was composed by lord Hervey, called "An Examination of the Facts and Reasons contained in a Pamphlet intitled, A Letter, &c." In this work, Sir Robert Walpole made several insertions,

* Chandler.

† Journals.

‡ Lords' Debates.

which

which prove the importance of the letter, and which are still extant in his own hand-writing among the Orford Papers. He here commented with greater freedom than he could venture to do in parliament, and answered the arguments in favour of the motion with more spirit than moderation, and more indignation than temper.

That part of his insertions which is most worthy of notice, was the answer given to the statement made in the house, respecting the prince's establishment, said to have been regulated by the king. From a fair investigation of the paper which the prince's officers had shewn to the house, he demonstrated, that it was not an *establishment*, but a calculation founded on the expenditure of preceding years; that it was exaggerated and overcharged in almost every branch, and that so far from having been regulated by the king, his majesty had not even a knowledge of its existence.

The indiscretion of the prince in bringing so unconstitutional a question before parliament, contrary to the judgment of his real friends; the violence of his counsellors, and particularly the petulant and indecorous insinuations thrown out against the queen * in the course of the debate, highly offended the king, and rendered the breach between the father and son irreparable. Coldness, reserve, and distance increased. The prince considered himself a state prisoner in the palace of his father, pined for a release, and seized the first plausible pretence of emancipating himself from the controul of his parents:

The royal family being at Hampton Court, the princess of Wales was seized with the pangs of child-birth, and the prince, without the least intimation to the king and queen, hurried her away to St. James's, where she was that night delivered of a princess, before the queen, or any of the officers of state, who, since the revolution, were accustomed to be present, could arrive.

The prince apologized for his abrupt departure to the queen, who went the next morning to visit the princess. He observed, that the suddenness with which his wife was seized, rendered it necessary to obtain immediate assistance, and that it was thought most prudent to return to London, where

The prince
leaves
Hampton
Court.
July 31.

* Walpole having in his speech maintained that the parliament had no right to interfere in the creation or maintenance of a prince of Wales, and that in the case of Richard, who on the death of his father, the Black Prince, was created prince of Wales, in consequence of an address or petition from parliament, that measure was in all probability directed by Ed-

ward the Third: In reply to this assertion, the opposition indecorously alluded to the influence of queen Caroline over the king, and her preference of the duke of Cumberland to the prince of Wales, by observing, that Edward doated in his old age, and was solely governed by Alice Pierce, and *his second son* the duke of Lancaster.

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1734¹⁰ 1737.

Resentment
of the king.

good assistance was to be obtained, than wait till the physicians and midwives could arrive at Hampton Court, which might be too late; he entreated the queen to explain to the king the motives which induced him to retire from Hampton Court, without intimating his design, which the hurry of his departure had alone prevented; and he professed also his intention of waiting on the king that morning. The queen advised him to delay this visit for a few days, in which the prince acquiesced. He repeated the same apology to Sir Robert Walpole and lord Harrington, who had come by the king's command to be present at the birth. The king, however, was not moved by this justification, but resolved to express his resentment in a manner no less public, than that in which he conceived the indignity was offered. A draught of a message was accordingly prepared by Sir Robert Walpole, and submitted by him to the consideration of the lord chancellor, lord Wilmington, and lord Harrington. The chancellor, with a view to shew great tenderness to the situation of the princess, and to gain time for conciliation, before the most aggravating circumstances of the rupture were rendered permanent, and incapable of modification, by being committed to writing, disapproved the draught, and proposed another in more soft and gentle terms:

"The king hath commanded me to acquaint your royal highness, that his majesty is most heartily rejoiced at the safe delivery of the princess, but that, on account of certain circumstances in your royal highness's behaviour relating to that event, which have given his majesty just offence, he thinks it not proper to see you, with the particular reasons whereof he will cause your royal highness to be acquainted in due time."

Lord Wilmington, who seldom declared himself explicitly on any subject, supported, however, with unusual warmth, the original draught; and as lord Harrington was silent, the chancellor's alteration was rejected, and the original carried. On the 3d of August, it was sent to the prince by lord Essex, the lord of the bedchamber in waiting, and contained these words:

His message.

"The king has commanded me to acquaint your royal highness, that his majesty most heartily rejoices at the safe delivery of the princess, but that your carrying away her royal highness from Hampton Court, the then residence of the king, the queen, and the family, under the pains, and certain indications of immediate labour, to the imminent danger and hazard both of the princess and her child, after sufficient warnings for a week before, to have made the necessary preparations for this happy event, without acquainting his majesty or the queen with the circumstances the princess was in, or giving them the least notice of your departure, is looked upon by the king to be such a deliberate indignity, offered to himself and to the queen, that he has commanded

commanded me to acquaint your royal highness, that he resents it to the highest degree."

Chapter 48.

1737.

In reply to this message, the prince wrote a letter, in which, after expressing his mortification at having displeased the king, he justified his conduct, repeated the same motives as he had stated to the queen in person, and requested permission to wait upon the king the next morning. This request having been rejected, the prince repeated, in another submissive letter, his earnest hopes of being restored to favour. No answer was returned to this application, but a message from the king was conveyed by the earl of Dunmore, appointing the baptism to be performed on the 29th, declaring, that he should send the lord chancellor to stand god-father as his proxy, the queen's lady of the bedchamber for the queen, and desiring the princess to appoint one of her ladies of the bedchamber to represent the dowager duchess of Saxe Gotha, the other god-mother.

August 4.

The prince took this opportunity to reiterate, both to the king and queen, his application for pardon, with increasing earnestness and humility. His entreaties, however, had no effect. The king adopted the violent resolution of making a total separation between his family and that of the prince, by dismissing him from his residence in the palace of St. James's. In taking this resolution, he was, if not confirmed, at least not opposed by the minister.

The prudence and moderation of the chancellor saw the danger of such a separation. However disagreeable his interposition might be, both to the king and Walpole, he thought it his duty to prevent, if possible, such extremities. With this view, he went over to New Park, and had a long and interesting conference with Sir Robert Walpole*.

Conference
between the
chancellor
and Wal-
pole.

"He laid it down as a principle, that in this nice affair, two great points were always to be pursued. First, the real and essential interest of the king and his family, in which the whole of the kingdom was involved; and next, the support of that authority and reverence, which was due to his majesty. That it was the duty of his ministers and servants to endeavour to combine both these views, and in their conduct not to lose sight of either. That he could not help thinking, that if there was a disposition to it, a reconciliation might be effected consistently with both; but if that should be found impossible, a total separation must indeed be submitted to. However, he begged leave to lay before him several considerations, which seemed mate-

* This conference is given verbatim, from lord Hardwicke's interesting narrative before mentioned.

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1734 to 1737.

rial in this great question, some whereof distinguished the case from that of the quarrel in the late reign, and made the present breach more formidable.

" 1. That it ought to be considered what influence it would have on that side of the question, which had been once moved in parliament, and was expected to be brought there again, viz. the prince's demand of a larger allowance, and this upon different suppositions. It appeared to him, that if the king should be finally in the right, and the prince continue, as he was certainly at first, on the affair of the departure, in the wrong, it would strengthen the king as to that question; for nobody could, with any shadow of reason, maintain that the king could with decency be addressed to increase his son's allowance, while he was standing out in defiance. But on the other hand, it must be attended to, that this offence was such as to admit of a satisfaction between a father and a son; and if the world should think the prince had made a proper submission, and yet the king turn him out of doors, it would strengthen the prince in his demand; since it might then be said, that the king had causelessly obliged him to live by himself, with an increase of family, at a great expence. He added, that it must be expected that even those who least wished a reconciliation, would advise him to make such a submission, when they were sure it could not, or would not, be accepted.

" 2. That in the next place, the situation and circumstances of the royal family deserved the greatest attention. In the late reign, the difference concerned only the king and prince; there were no other children to be affected by it. The moment the breath was out of the late king's body, it was at an end as to the royal family, though particular subjects might feel its effects. That now the case was far different. A queen consort, the duke and four princesses, not to include the princess of Orange, must necessarily be, to a degree, involved in it. If the prince should survive his father, he must, and by the course of law and nature, ought to reign. All these will be more or less in his power. The queen possibly least of all is; but how far the honey-moon of a new reign may carry men as to her large jointure, no one can foresee. The others absolutely. Yet these must now, as they justly deserve, live at court in the sun-shine of the king and queen's favour, the prince being excluded. This will naturally breed an alienation of affection, great envying and much ill blood, which may break out into fatal consequences when the prince shall find himself their sovereign. Add to this, that it is not probable that any settlement will ever be obtained from the parliament to make cadets of the royal family, independant of any person who shall wear the crown.

" 3. He

“ 3. He next considered the case of the prince’s children. Either the king must take the custody of them, or leave them with his royal highness. If he should take them, having a favourite younger son, and several daughters, justly dear to him, what jealousies and suspicions may not arise in case of accidents. Malice may even suggest what was once believed in France, of the late duke of Orleans. If the king should suffer these branches of the royal family to remain with the prince, will it not greatly weaken the former, and strengthen the latter? And at length, they will be bred up under the same influence which is now objected to their father.

“ 4. As to the administration, what an inundation of pensions did the breach in the late reign produce! What a weight did that bring on my lord Sunderland’s ministry! And it should be considered whether even that miserable expedient will be found practicable under this king. The present demands of mankind will rise on one side in proportion as greater hopes are held out on the other. It put lord Sunderland on strong measures to secure himself, which yet he could not carry. Witness the peerage bill, wherein were several provisions tempting to the Whigs, and yet they rejected it.

“ 5. It will make a coalition between the Whigs desperate and impossible. Before this, the Whigs in opposition wanted a head, became liable to the disagreeable imputation of constantly acting with the Jacobites; had no prospect of ever coming into any share of power, but by reuniting with their old friends. They will now find a head in the prince, and he, being the immediate successor in the protestant line, will be an irrefragable answer to the reproach of Jacobitism. Besides, the Whigs, as a party, will, in good policy, not wish such a coalition, unless it could be accompanied with a reconciliation between the father and son, lest it should throw the successor wholly into the hands of the Tories, and make their cause desperate when he comes to take possession; whereas, by having one set of Whigs in the prince’s favour, the party will have a fair chance to be preserved from ruin when that event shall arrive.

“ 6. Lastly, it must not be forgot, that if the king should carry his resentment so far as to remove his son out of his palace, it will be necessary that some account of a transaction of this high nature in the royal family, should be given to foreign courts. This measure was taken in the late reign. If the prince should at length fully submit himself to his father, and do that which the world shall judge a complete satisfaction for the late offence, what reasons can openly be assigned to justify such a conduct? He would not say that reasons might not be suggested, from a series of conduct offensive and provoking in many other respects; but when once those come to be coolly

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examined, he suspected whether they would be found such, as it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, publicly to avow and explain."

"The minister allowed all these to be considerations of great weight, without attempting to take off their force, except as to that of the prince's children, who, he said, were intended to be left with their parents, whilst of tender age, only for nurture. The great point on which he laid his stress, was that the king had now an advantage, by the prince having put himself so much in the wrong, which ought not to be parted with. That he was apprehensive there must be a total breach before there could be a complete reconciliation; and to make up the particular difference about carrying away the princess from Hampton Court, without the grand point, would not be so much as skinning over the sore, which would infallibly break out again worse than ever. That it was impossible to reconcile the whole without money, and that could not now be obtained; neither was it fit to advise the king to make such an advance, until his son, by proper acts of submission, and declared alteration of conduct, should put himself in a condition to deserve it.

"As to the submission already made, he enlarged much on the offensive behaviour to the queen; and in particular, objected that, although the king in his message had charged the *fact to be a high indignity to himself and to the queen*, the prince had not in any of his letters asked her pardon, or so much as made an excuse to her majesty for what he had done."

"Hereupon, the chancellor took occasion to observe, that this was manifestly the game of those advisers of the prince, who intended to prevent a reconciliation; and as this last was their point, they could not play their cards better. That consequently the most effectual method of disappointing it must be the best play on the other side: and as the queen had great talents, as well as great power with the king, would not it become her wisdom to suppress the woman's resentment, and take the contrary part to that into which these men wished to drive her? That in his opinion, if her majesty continued unmoved by their ill usage, and in spite of all their provocations would reconcile the father and son, she would endear herself to the nation more than ever, and make an absolute conquest of all her enemies at once."

These sensible representations not only had no effect on the minister, but even seem to have made a contrary impression; for he said afterwards to some of his friends, "The lord chancellor made me a long visit, and talked like an angel on the subject of the prince, yet I thought his arguments made for my conclusion rather than his," which induced the chan-

cancellor

cellor to lament the shortness of human foresight, and exclaim, in the words of Virgil,

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1737.

"Nescia mens hominum fati, fortisque futuræ,
 "Et servare modum rebus sublata secundis.
 "Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum,
 "Intactum Pallanta et cum spolia ista diemque
 "Oderit *."

Although it cannot be denied that the conduct of the prince had given great and deserved offence to the king and queen, and that in particular his behaviour to the queen had been highly disrespectful, yet it cannot at the same time be sufficiently lamented, that the minister involved in the interests of party, the feuds of the royal family. He considered the struggle as much between himself and opposition, as between the king and prince, and knowing the prince's aversion to his ministry, viewed a cordial reconciliation as tending to his removal.

Conduct of Walpole.

Under these impressions he had drawn up, by order of the king, the substance of a message to be delivered to the prince, ordering him to remove from the palace of St. James; and he communicated it confidentially to the lord chancellor, the duke of Newcastle, and Pelham, for their opinion, before it should be submitted to the whole council. He produced two letters, sent by the prince to the king and queen after the christening; and acquainted them, that the king was not satisfied with the submission made by his son. That with regard to the king himself; they were mere words, and calculated to be offensive and provoking to the queen. That none of the letters contained any assurance of a change of conduct, or of acting in subordination to his father's will for the future. That he was entirely under the influence and direction of persons whom the king had thought fit to remove from his councils and service, and who were in a determined opposition to all his measures; and that lord Chesterfield and lord Carteret were known to be with him in private every day, and were called into his closet after the levee, as regularly as the king's ministers were called into his. He recapitulated many particulars, to shew that the prince had

Farther proceedings in the cabinet.

September 5.

* "O mortals! blind in fate, who never know
 "To bear high fortune, or endure the low!
 "The time shall come, when Turnus, but in vain,
 "Shall with untouch'd the trophies of the slain,
 "Shall with the fatal belt were far away,
 "And curse the dire remembrance of the day."

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avowedly set himself at the head of a faction in opposition to the king, and that these letters were understood by the king to proceed from their dictâtes, and intended only to amuse and deceive him. That things being in this situation, the king had resolved not to permit his son to reside any longer in his palace, but to send an order for his departure, with his whole family, as soon as it could be done without prejudice or inconvenience to the prince, and had commanded him to prepare a draught of a message for that purpose; which he then read.

The chancellor and his friends having expressed their concern, and delivered their opinion, that such a message should be avoided if possible, consistently with the king's honour; the minister replied, that such was the king's final resolution. It was then proposed, that a message should be sent to the prince, acquainting him with the kind of submission which was required of him, and the alterations in his conduct, which the king expected as the terms of the reconciliation. But the proposal was rejected by Sir Robert Walpole, as likely to beget mutual altercations, and produce a paper war between the king and his son, which would be attended with still more fatal consequences than taking it *short at first* *.

The draught of the message was then taken into consideration. It was couched in very harsh and improper terms, and contained indecorous reflections, inconsistent with the dignity of the crown, and the station of the disputants. A paragraph towards the conclusion, expressed a severe reproach on *persons in general* resorting to the prince, who did not pay their court to the king, but opposed his measures, called them a *FACTION*, with other strong and harsh words. To all these, the chancellor objected, as a style improper between princes, and indecent from the king to his son. He thought, if a message of this nature must go, it should be strong, but full of decorum. Sir Robert Walpole declared his opinion, that, as the prince had plainly set himself at the head of the opposition, it was right to carry the war into the enemy's country. And as they attacked the king through the sides of his ministers, to return it by falling on the prince's advisers. To this the chancellor replied, that, as to such advisers as fomented this fatal division in the royal family, the harshest words which language could furnish were not too much; but his objection was, that, as the draught then stood, it comprised more, and might extend to all that came to the prince, who happened to differ from the king's ministers in parliament, and did not come to court. That this would include some persons of the first quality and

* Lord Hardwicke's Narrative.

estates in the kingdom, besides great numbers of others who were only misguided; and as it was probable this paper might one time or other be laid before the parliament, it might give rise to very disagreeable debates and questions there. The duke of Newcastle and Mr. Pelham acceded to his opinion; whereupon most of those expressions and epithets were at length struck out, and that remarkable paragraph entirely changed and confined to the *advisers* of the prince, who *fomented the division in the royal family, and thereby weakened the common interest of the whole.*

On the 9th of September, this message was laid before the lords of the cabinet council who were not absent from London *.

Sir Robert Walpole acquainted them with the several causes of the king's displeasure against the prince; he said, that for these reasons the king was of opinion that the families should be separated, and desired their advice on the method of doing it; that he had, by the king's order, and with his approbation, prepared the draught of a message to the prince, which he should now submit to their consideration. He at the same time intimated, that the king thought the style of the draught *full gentle* enough. He then read the letters which had passed between the prince on one hand, and the king and queen on the other; and directed them to observe the difference between the narrative of the fact contained in the first letter to the king, and the accounts which he gave to the queen, as well as to lord Harrington and himself, the morning after the labour, which last he read from some minutes to which lord Harrington had agreed. He observed, with great emphasis, that these letters were specious empty words, without any assurances or alteration of conduct, and laid great stress on the variations between the letters to the king, and those to the queen, and particularly requested them to remark, that in the letter to the queen, the words, *your majesty*, were never used, but only *madame* and *vous*. He then read the draught of the message.

The lords sufficiently testified their concern, by their looks and expressions. They understood this to be a communication of the king's determined resolution, which was not to be changed. They agreed that he was undoubtedly master in his own family, and as he had been highly offended, he

* Present. Archbishop of Canterbury (Potter) — Lord chancellor — Lord Godolphin (lord privy seal) — Duke of Grafton (lord chamberlain) — Duke of Richmond (master of the horse) — Duke of Newcastle — Earl of Pembroke (groom of the stole) — Earl of

May — Lord Harrington — Sir Robert Walpole — Sir Charles Wager.

Absent, Lord president (in Sussex) — Earl of Scarborough (in Yorkshire, and not sufficiently recovered to attend business) — Duke of Devonshire (in Ireland) — Duke of Dorset (at Namur) — Duke of Argyle (in Oxfordshire.)

Period VI. 1734 to 1737. was to judge whether he would forgive or resent. They considered that their advice was only required as to the *method*, not the *measure*, and therefore proceeded to take the draught into consideration. A few exceptions were made to the terms. Two were made by the lord chancellor, the first to the words, *I cannot suffer myself to be imposed upon by them*, as too harsh, and not adequate to the dignity of the personages concerned, he proposed to insert, *I cannot, consistently with my own honour and authority, suffer them to have any weight with me*. But this alteration was not adopted. The second objection was to the word *rendezvous*, as too low and coarse; and as all the lords concurred in the same opinion, it was omitted, and the word *resort* suffered to stand alone. In the place of, *you shall not reside in my palace*, inserted at the proposal of the archbishop, lord Godolphin offered, *I think it not fit that you should reside in my palace*; an alteration which was approved by the chancellor, as expressive of the king's opinion, and properly introductory of the subsequent command to leave St. James's. This was rejected on the observation of Sir Robert Walpole, that those words could not be considered as sufficiently strong.

After making a few other verbal alterations of little consequence, the message was agreed to, and submitted to the final approbation of the king*.

The manner of sending it to the prince was proposed to be by a message signed by the king at the top, with his name at length, and with the two first letters at the bottom, after the form of instructions; and that an order, signed by his majesty, should be delivered to the persons who should be charged with carrying it, reciting the message in the very words, and commanding them to read it to, and leave it with his royal highness. It was also agreed, that copies of this message should be privately delivered to the several foreign ministers in England, and other copies sent to the king's ministers residing abroad, as a *species facti*, or narrative of the king's reasons for this proceeding with his son.

Other particulars were mentioned, and it seemed to be the general sense of the lords that they should be regulated in like manner as upon the separation in the late reign; but it was thought proper to leave them to the personal direction of the king himself, without offering any particular advice thereupon. On Saturday, September 10th, this message, signed as before mentioned, was sent to the prince by the duke of Grafton, duke of Richmond, and earl of Pembroke, who had a signed order, as above described, for their justification.

* Narrative.

“ The

The prince
ordered to
quit St.
James's.

"The professions you have lately made in your letters, of your particular regard to me, are so contradictory to all your actions, that I cannot suffer myself to be imposed upon by them. You know very well, you did not give the least intimation to me, or to the queen, that the princess was with child, or breeding, until within less than a month of the birth of the young princess: you removed the princess twice in the week immediately preceding the day of her delivery, from the place of my residence, in expectation, as you have voluntarily declared, of her labour; and both times, upon your return, you industriously concealed from the knowledge of me and the queen, every circumstance relating to this important affair: and you at last, without giving any notice to me, or to the queen, precipitately hurried the princess from Hampton Court, in a condition not to be named. After having thus, in execution of your own determined measures, exposed both the princess and her child to the greatest perils, you now plead surprise, and tenderness for the princess, as the only motives that occasioned these repeated indignities offered to me, and to the queen your mother.

"This extravagant and undutiful behaviour, in so essential a point as the birth of an heir to my crown, is such an evidence of your premeditated defiance of me, and such a contempt of my authority, and of the natural right belonging to your parents, as cannot be excused by the pretended innocence of your intentions, nor palliated or disguised by specious words only.

"But the whole tenour of your conduct, for a considerable time, has been so entirely void of all real duty to me, that I have long had reason to be highly offended with you.

"And until you withdraw your regard and confidence from those by whose advice you are directed and encouraged in your unwarrantable behaviour to me and to the queen, and until you return to your duty, you shall not reside in my palace, which I will not suffer to be made the resort of them, who, under the appearance of an attachment to you, foment the division which you have made in my family, and thereby weaken the common interest of the whole. In this situation I will receive no reply; but when your actions manifest a just sense of your duty and submission, *that* may induce me to pardon, what at present I most justly resent.

"In the mean time, it is my pleasure that you leave St. James's, with all your family, when it can be done without prejudice or inconvenience to the princess. I shall for the present leave to the princess the care of my grand-daughter, until a proper time calls upon me to consider of her education."

All farther application from the prince being ineffectual, he retired from
the

Period VI. the palace, to Norfolk-house, in St. James's Square, where he took up his residence, and his house became the centre of political opposition. The king accordingly issued an order, forbidding all persons who paid their court to the prince and princess of Wales, from being admitted into his presence at any of the royal palaces.

Feb. 27,
1738.

All the correspondence which passed between the king, queen, and the prince, on this unfortunate occasion, was published, by the authority of the court, and distributed to each of the foreign ministers in England, and to the British ambassadors abroad.

Anger of the
prince.

As the message delivered on the 10th of September, contained many reflections on the prince, which no man of honour could forgive *, the measure tended still farther to irritate him, and to supply an excuse for his resentment to the king, and his detestation of the minister, who incurred the principal blame in this whole transaction, and was accused of fomenting the misunderstanding, to serve his own sinister purposes. The prince gave credit to these imputations. Walpole was held out as the man who having so often, nay, so constantly sacrificed the national interest to his avarice, his ambition, and his fears, had now sacrificed to his passions the peace of his master's family, and taken that opportunity to make him declare a proscription to all those who opposed the minister †.

Review of
Walpole's
conduct.

In reviewing the conduct of Walpole in this delicate transaction, he cannot be wholly exempted from blame; nor is it easy to ascertain in what degree he was culpable. He had, on former occasions, earnestly laboured to reconcile the father and son, and had infused into the king a spirit of moderation and forbearance. This case was attended with peculiar difficulties, which can never be fully appreciated. Lord chancellor Hardwicke himself says, "Sir Robert Walpole informed me of certain passages between the king and himself, and between the queen and the prince, of too high and secret a nature, even to be trusted to this narrative; but from thence, I found great reason to think that this unhappy difference between the king and queen, and his royal highness, turned upon some points of a more interesting and important nature, than have hitherto appeared ‡."

It is, however, justly remarked by the same candid observer, that those who attempted to reconcile the breach, were not listened to on either side. On the part of the prince, those who wanted to set him at their head, against his father's measures, seemed to have it in view to write such letters to the king as might read well when published to the world, be taken for a sub-

* Opinions of the duchess of Marlborough.

† Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham. Correspondence.

‡ Lord Hardwicke's Narrative.

mission, and at the same time effectually prevent that from being accepted, by provoking the queen, and thereby cut off the chance of mediation, and shut the only door through which any reconciliation could enter. On the other side, Sir Robert Walpole seemed to think, that they had now an advantage over the prince which ought not to be parted with, and that it would be better for the administration to have a total and declared separation, than that things should remain in the precarious state in which they then stood *.

In the course of this unfortunate transaction, the prince gave signs of high spirit and extreme sensibility; a striking instance of which is recorded by lord chancellor Hardwicke, which I shall relate in his own words †. "On the fourth of August, the day of proroguing the parliament, I went to St. James's in my way to Westminster, in order to enquire after the health of the princess of Wales, and the new born princess. After I had performed that ceremony, I went away, and was overtaken at the further end of Pall-mall, by one of the prince's footmen, with a message that his royal highness desired to speak with me.

Lord Hard-
wicke's in-
terview with
the prince.

"Being returned, I was carried into the nursery, whither the prince came immediately out of the princess's bedchamber, and turned all the women out of the room. Having said many civil things, and made me sit down, he shewed me a message which he had received the day before from the king, which he said, he presumed I, being of the cabinet, must have seen before. Without staying for an answer, he made a long apology for his conduct, much to the effect of his first letter to the king, with this addition, that if the king, who was apt sometimes to be pretty quick, should have objected to her going to London, and an altercation should have arisen, what a condition would the poor princess have been in? He then said, he would read me two letters he had written, the one to the king, and the other to the queen; whereupon I asked him whether they had been sent, for if they had not, I was determined in my own mind not to have seen or heard them read. He answered, they were sent the day before by my lord Jersey, and then read them. He asked me what I thought of them; at which I bowed, and said nothing. He went on, that upon those letters the king sent word he would not see him; but he did not think fit to let it rest there on his part, and had sent another letter by lord Carnarvon that morning, which he read, and asked me, if it was not very respectful; to this I

* Lord Hardwicke's Narrative.

† Ibid.

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answered, *very respectful*; and indeed, it was a much more proper letter than the former.

"I then proceeded to tell his royal highness, that I had heard nothing of this unhappy affair, till my going to Hampton Court on the Tuesday before, to congratulate the king and queen on the birth of their grand-daughter. That I then found their majesties highly offended with what had passed, and I should be unjust to his royal highness, if I concealed from him, that, from the circumstances preceding and accompanying the carrying away the princess, they understood it to proceed from a deliberate intention to take that part without their privacy. I added, that incidents of this nature gave the deepest concern and affliction to every one who wished well to the whole royal family, and to none more than myself. That every occasion of that kind ought to be removed; for that *union* in the royal family was most essential to the true interest and preservation of it. That the contrary gave the most formidable advantages to their enemies; whereas nothing could hurt any branch of it when united. That I hoped his royal highness would shew such a submission and dutiful behaviour to the king his father in the present juncture, as would tend to bring about this union, and that I was sure it would be the zealous endeavour of the king's servants, and in particular of myself, to do every thing that might facilitate it.

"He answered, my lord, *I don't doubt you in the least, for I believe you to be a very honest man*; and as I was rising up, embraced me, offering to kiss me: I instantly kneeled down, and kissed his hand, whereupon he raised me up and kissed my cheek. The scene had something in it moving; and my heart was full of the melancholy prospect that I thought lay before me, which made me almost burst into tears. The prince observed this, and appeared moved himself, and said, *let us sit down my lord, a little, and recollect ourselves, that we not may not go out thus*. Soon after which, I took my leave, and went directly to the house of lords."

CHAPTER THE FORTY-NINTH:

1737.

*Illness—Fortitude—and Death of Queen Caroline.—Virtues.—Grief of the King.
—Affliction of Sir Robert Walpole.*

I SHALL close the transactions of the year 1737, with the illness and death of queen Caroline, an event highly disastrous to the country, to the king, and to Sir Robert Walpole. This illustrious and amiable woman, had been for some time in a declining state of health. The disorder under which she had laboured, and which occasioned her death, was a rupture, which, from motives of delicacy, she had communicated only to the mistress of the robes, her favourite lady Sundon: she was even so imprudent as to conceal the cause of her illness from the medical men who were called in to her relief. This false delicacy, which was incompatible with her usual magnanimity, was the cause of her death. For the medicines which were administered, and the methods taken, were diametrically opposite to those which would have been adopted, had her disorder been known. Judging from the symptoms, and from her own declarations, the physicians treated it as a gout in her stomach, and administered strong cordials, which aggravated the malady. When the danger became so imminent as to render the concealment impossible, it was too late. She submitted in vain to the most painful operations, and the surgeon who performed them declared, that if he had been acquainted with her real situation two days sooner, her speedy recovery would have been the consequence*.

Illness of the queen.

Although racked with extreme agony, almost without intermission, during twelve days and nights, she bore her sufferings not only with patience and resignation, but almost without a groan, maintaining, to the last moment of her dissolution, serenity, temper, dignity, greatness of soul, and an unaffected submission to the ways of Providence. In all this melancholy scene, she behaved with such invariable courtesy to every one about her, that one of the physicians observed, he had never met with a similar instance in the whole

* Letter from Charles Ford to Swift, November 22, 1737. Swift's Works.

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1734 to 1737.

course of his practice. She repeatedly expressed to her attendants, her grateful sense of their laborious watchings, and distinguished each of them with appropriate marks of regard.

She recommended her servants, in the most affecting and solemn manner, to the king's favour and protection; extended her concern to the lowest of them, and was equally warm in her solicitude for their welfare; recounting to him the faithfulness of their respective services.

This firmness and resignation were not the effect of insensibility or stoical indifference, but derived from the strongest exertions of reason and religion. On the second day of her illness, she was observed to shed some tears, occasioned either by the lowness of her spirits, the anguish of her sufferings, or by tenderness for the despair of her family; she soon, however, recovered from this debility, and resumed her accustomed fortitude. Apprehensive that during a painful operation, she had so far forgotten herself as to use peevish expressions, she reproached herself with having shewn an unbecoming impatience.

She frequently declared that she had made it the business of her life to discharge her religious and social duties; she hoped God would pardon her infirmities, and accept the sincerity of her endeavours, which were always intended to promote the king's honour, and the prosperity of the nation. She declared that she was a hearty well-wisher to the liberties of the people; and that if she had erred in any part of her public conduct, it arose from want of judgment, not from intention.

Death.

A little before she died, she said to the physician, "How long can this last?" and on his answering, "Your majesty will soon be eased of your pains;" she replied, "The sooner the better." She then repeated a prayer of her own composing, in which there was such a flow of natural eloquence, as demonstrated the vigour of a great and good mind. When her speech began to falter, and she seemed expiring, she desired to be raised up in her bed; and fearing that nature would not hold out long enough without artificial supports, she called to have water sprinkled on her, and a little after desired it might be repeated. She then, with the greatest composure and presence of mind, requested her weeping relations to "kneel down and pray for her." Whilst they were reading some prayers, she exclaimed, "pray aloud, that I may hear;" and after the Lord's prayer was concluded, in which she joined as well as she could, she said, "So," and waving her hand, lay down and expired*.

Novemb. 20.

* The principal circumstances of her death, are extracted from Dr. Alured Clarke's Essay towards the Character of Queen Caroline.

Having

Having already discussed the character of the queen, I shall only add a few traits to the preceding sketch *. She was blessed with a natural serenity and calmness of mind, and often expressed her thankfulness to God, that he had given her a temper which was not easily ruffled, and which enabled her to support every difficulty. It was truly said of her, that the same softness of behaviour and command of herself, that appeared in the drawing room, went along with her into her private apartments, gladdened every body that was about her person, accompanied her as well in the gay and cheerful seasons of life, as under the most trying circumstances, and did not fail her even in the hour of death itself.

Chapter 49.

1737.

Virtues.

One part of her conduct, which reflects the highest honour on her memory, was her maternal attention to her children, and particularly to her daughters. She superintended their education, directed their behaviour, formed their manners, and tempered her reproofs with a mixture of proper severity and kindness, which rendered her equally beloved and respected.

The enemies of queen Caroline, have represented her as being of an unforgiving temper, and even reproached her with a want of maternal affection. It was suggested, that she fomented the misunderstanding between the king and the prince of Wales, but on the contrary, she exerted her utmost influence to abate the petulance of the son, and the irritability of the father. Once in particular, when an action of the prince had been represented to the king with malicious aggravation, the queen defended her son, and good naturedly observed, "Ce n'est qu'une indiscretion de page." 'Tis nothing but a youthful frolic †. The tongue of slander has even reproached her with maintaining her implacability to the hour of death, and refusing her pardon to the prince, who had humbly requested to receive her blessing. To this imputation, Chesterfield alludes in a copy of verses, circulated at the time:

Aspersions
examined.

"And unforgiving, unforgiven dies."

Pope also has consigned to posterity this aspersion, in terms of malignant irony:

"Or teach the melancholy muse to mourn,
Hang the sad verse on CAROLINA'S urn,
And hail her passage to the realms of rest,
All parts perform'd, and ALL her children blest ‡."

I am

* Chapter 31.

† From lord Orford.

‡ See Epilogue to the Satires, Dialogue, 1.
L 79. The satirist, with a duplicity not un-

usual to him, has affected in a note to repair the insult offered to her memory, by observing, that her last moments manifested the utmost courage and resolution. It is, however, justly.

Period VI. I am happy to have it in my power to remove this stigma from the memory, of this great princess. She sent her blessing and a message of forgiveness to her son, and told Sir Robert Walpole, that she would have seen him with pleasure, but prudence forbade the interview, as it might embarrass and irritate the king *.

Liberality.

" Her charities were limited only by her revenue; though she avoided all appearance of ostentation so much, that many persons who subsisted by her bounty, were wholly ignorant of their benefactress; and she was so liberal that her public and private lists, with the occasional sums expended on the same account, amounted to near a *fifth* part of her whole income †."

Her disposition was so humane and benevolent, that the unfortunate in all situations and religions were secure of her protection. She paid a particular attention to those Roman Catholics, whose zeal in favour of the Pretender had exposed them to the rigour of the laws. Several Popish and Jacobite ladies, and particularly the duchess of Norfolk, were admitted to private conferences. Their representations procured liberal supplies of money to many of the most indigent. In some instances, she even carried her protection to an impolitic extreme, and in a manner which distressed Sir Robert Walpole. Archibald earl of Hly, who principally managed the affairs of Scotland, having been reproached for permitting so large a number of Jacobite meeting-houses in Edinburgh, and in other parts of the kingdom, in open defiance of the laws, as they had not complied with the conditions required in the act of toleration; he acknowledged the fact, and exculpated himself, by declaring that he had laid a scheme for suppressing them before the minister, who discouraged his attempt, by observing, that their friends had a ready access to the queen by the back stairs, and that all his attempts would be defeated ‡.

justly observed by Dr. Warton, on this passage, that, " no subtle commentary can torture these words to mean any thing but the most poignant sarcasm on the behaviour of this great

personage to her son on her death bed : " and adds, that " about the same time, Pope wrote a couplet on the same subject : "

" Here lies, wrapt up in forty thousand towels,
The only proof that Caroline had bowels."

The evidence that Pope was the author of this infamous quibble, which is generally attributed to Chesterfield, is not given by Dr. Warton. Lord Mansfield had it from Pope himself, told it to lord Orford, from whom I received it,

with a variation of " seven and twenty," instead of " forty thousand towels."

* From lord Orford.

† Character of Queen Caroline, p. 12.

‡ Etough, imparted by Archibald duke of Argyle.

A con-

A conspicuous part in the character of queen Caroline, was her great patronage of learned men. The protection she afforded to the first luminaries of the church has been slightly mentioned. She distinguished Clarke, Hoadly, Butler, Sherlock, Secker, and Pearce, with peculiar marks of regard. The gracious manner in which she listened to recommendations of literary eminence, is well displayed in an anecdote relating to the celebrated author of "The Analogy between Natural and Revealed Religion." Secker *, while he was king's chaplain, mentioned, in conversation with the queen, Butler, who was then rector of Stanhope. The queen said, she thought he was dead, and making enquiries of archbishop Blackburne, if he was not dead, his answer was, "no madam, but he is buried." Soon afterwards, without solicitation, she appointed him clerk of her closet, and he used to attend her every day, from seven to nine, in the afternoon. She also caused his name to be inserted on the list for a vacant bishopric.

Obscurity, disgrace, and banishment, were no obstacles to her bounty and protection. She conferred benefactions on Stephen Duck, who from a common labourer, had raised himself into notice as a poet. She obtained the pardon of Savage, who was condemned to death for having committed a murder in a drunken fray, in spite of the opposition of his unnatural mother, and supported him with an annual pension †. She shewed her esteem for the

Chapter 49.

1737.

Patronage of learning.

* Life of Secker.

† "When Savage was disappointed in his application for the place of poet laureat, which was given to Colley Cibber, he applied, in the bitterness of distress, boldly to the queen, that having once given him life, she would enable him to support it; and therefore published a short poem on her birth-day, to which he annexed the odd title of volunteer laureat. Not having a friend at court who would get him introduced, or present him, he published the poem, which was not ill calculated to strike the queen. The queen sent for the verses, and in a few days after the publication, Savage received a bank bill of fifty pounds, and a gracious message by lord North and Grey: That her majesty was highly

pleased with the verses; that she took particularly kind his lines relating to the king; that he had permission to write annually on the same subject; and that he should yearly receive the like present, till something better (which was her majesty's intention) could be done for him. After this, he was permitted to present one of his annual poems to the queen, had the honour of kissing her hand, and met with the most gracious reception." Johnson's Life of Savage.

From these now forgotten poems, may I be permitted to quote one passage which alludes to the beneficial consequences of the pacific system, planned by Sir Robert Walpole, and supported by queen Caroline.

"Here cease my plaint—See yon enlivening scenes!
Child of the spring! Behold the best of queens!
Softness and beauty rose this heavenly morn,
Dawn'd wisdom, and benevolence was born.
Joy o'er a people, in her influence rose;
Like that which spring o'er rural nature throws.

Period VI.
1734 to 1737.

Grief of the
king.

The queen
recommends
Walpole.

the memory of Milton, by conferring a present on his grand-daughter. She obtained the recal of lord Lansdowne, and of Carte, the nonjuring historian, who had both been obliged to abscond for suspected principles *.

Words cannot sufficiently express the sensibility and affection of George the Second during her illness, and his regret for her loss. He watched by her bed-side with unabated affection, and could scarcely be prevailed on to take any rest, till she expired.

As soon as the first emotions of grief had subsided, he loved to talk of his departed queen, recounted her virtues, and considered how she would have acted on occasions of difficulty. He continued the salaries of all the officers and nominal servants who were not taken into his own household, and commanded a list of her numerous benefactions to be laid before him; saying that it was his intention, that nobody, as far as possible, should be a sufferer besides himself †.

On her death bed, the queen testified her approbation of Sir Robert Walpole's measures, and the high opinion she entertained of his capacity and rectitude. Turning to the minister, who with the king was standing by her bed-side, she said to him, I hope you will never desert the king, but continue to serve him with your usual fidelity; and pointing to the king, she added, "I recommend his majesty to you." The king said nothing, and the minister was alarmed, lest this mode of making him of more consequence

War to the peaceful pipe resigns his roar,
And breaks his billows on some distant shore.
Domestic discord sinks beneath her smile,
And arts, and trade, and plenty glad the isle.
Lo! Industry surveys, with feasted eyes,
His due reward, a plenteous harvest rise!
Nor (taught by Commerce) joys in that alone,
But sees the harvest of a world his own.
Hence thy just praise, thou mild, majestic Thames!
Rich river, richer than Pactolus' streams!
Than those renown'd of yore, by poets roll'd
O'er intermingled pearls, and sands of gold.
How glorious thou, when from old Ocean's urn,
Loaded with India's wealth, thy waves return!
Alive thy banks! along each bordering line,
High cultur'd blooms, inviting villas shine:
And while around ten thousand beauties glow,
These still o'er those redoubling lustre throw."

* Biographia Britannica.

† Character of Queen Caroline, p. 41.

than

than the king, might awaken jealousy, and be the cause of his disgrace *. Chapter 49.
But these apprehensions were unfounded. 1737.

The king was so affected with the queen's death, that for a long time after that melancholy event, he could not see Sir Robert Walpole without bursting into tears. About a fortnight afterwards, the king shewed him an intercepted letter, in which it was observed, that as the queen was dead, the minister would lose his sole protector. "It is false," said he, good naturedly, "you remember that on her death bed the queen recommended me to you."

Horace Walpole has recorded a striking instance of the king's violent grief for the death of his queen, and affection to her memory, which I will relate in his own words. "Mr. Walpole can never be able to forget a melancholy epoch, when, about ten days after his arrival from Holland, upon the queen's death, his majesty found him with the princesses, in their apartment, and their royal highnesses immediately retiring, the king, with a flood of tears gushing from his eyes, which drew an equal torrent from those of his faithful subject then present, with agonies and sobs, gave a confidential detail to Mr. Walpole, of the inimitable virtues of his royal consort, that was now no more, and particularly with respect to the great relief and assistance which he found in her noble and calm disposition and sentiments, in governing such an humourfome and inconstant people; that her presence of mind often supported him in trying times, and the sweetness of her temper and prudence would moderate and assuage his own vivacity and resentment; that incidents of state of a rough, difficult, and disagreeable nature, would by her previous conferences and concert with that able minister, Sir Robert Walpole, be made smooth, easy, and palatable to him, but that he must now lead a helpless, disconsolate, and uncomfortable life, during the remainder of a troublesome reign, that he did not know what to do, nor which way to turn himself. But then recovering himself a little, he said, "as she never forgot her love and concern for me to the last moment of her days, she earnestly recommended it to me on her death bed (and his majesty emphatically added, that it was a just and wise recommendation) to follow the advice of Sir Robert Walpole, and never to part with so faithful and able a minister, this (said the king) is now my only resource, upon this I must entirely depend †."

Some time after the queen's death, before his hour of rising, George said to baron Brinkman, one of his Germans, "I hear you have a picture of my wife, which she gave you, and which is a better likeness than any in my

* From Lord Orford.

† Horace Walpole's Apology. Walpole Papers.

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1734 to 1737.

possession; bring it to me." When it was brought, the king seemed greatly affected, and after a short pause, he said, "It is very like, put it upon the chair at the foot of my bed, and leave it till I ring the bell." At the end of two hours he rang the bell, and when the baron entered, the king said, "Take this picture away, I never yet saw the woman worthy to buckle her shoe*."

Walpole was no less deeply affected than the king. He was sensible of the severe loss which he had experienced of the person who supported him in the closet, and he appreciated the difficulty of guiding the king, when the interposition of his patroness was no more, and anticipated the difficulties he was about to encounter from the jealousies of a discordant cabinet. Impressed with these sentiments, he closed a letter to Horace Walpole, in which he speaks of the queen's death, "I must have done, our grief and distraction wants no relation, I am oppressed with sorrow and dread†."

Sir Robert always entertained a high respect for the memory of his royal patroness queen Caroline; and it was principally through a deference to her recommendation, that some time after her death he obtained the deanery of Winchester for Dr. Pearce, and placed Butler upon the bench of bishops.

I shall close this chapter with an elegy on the death of queen Caroline, composed by Dodington‡.

Doding-
ton's elegy.

When Heav'n's decrees a prince's fate ordain;
A kneeling people supplicate in vain.
Too well our tears this mournful truth express,
And in a queen's a parent's loss confess.
A loss the general grief can best rehearse,
A theme superior to the pow'r of verse;
Though just our grief, be ev'ry murmur still,
Nor dare pronounce his dispensations ill;
In whose wise counsels and disposing hand,
The fates of monarchies and monarchs stand:
Who only knows the state of either fit,
And bids the erring sense of man submit.
Ye grateful Britons, to her memory just,
With pious tears imbalm her sacred dust;

* Communicated by Theodore Henry Broadhead, esquire, grandson of Baron Brinkman, who possesses the portrait alluded to in the text.

† Correspondence.
‡ Melcombe Papers.

Confess her grac'd with all that's good and great,
A public blessing to a favour'd state.
Patron of freedom, and her country's laws,
Sure friend to virtue's and religion's cause;
Religion's cause, whose charms superior shone
To ev'ry gay temptation of a crown.
Whose awful dictates all her soul possess'd,
Her one great aim to make a people blest.

Ye drooping muses mourn her hasty doom,
And spread your deathless honours round her tomb.
Her name to long succeeding ages raise,
Who both inspir'd and patroniz'd your lays.
Each gen'rous art fit penfive o'er her urn,
And ev'ry grace and ev'ry virtue mourn.

Attending angels bear your sacred prize,
Amidst the radiant glories of the skies:
Where godlike princes, who below pursu'd,
That noblest end of rule the public good,
Now sit secure, their gen'rous labour past,
With all the just rewards of virtue grac'd:
In that bright train distinguish'd let her move,
Who built her empire on a people's love.

PERIOD THE SEVENTH:

From the Death of Queen CAROLINE, to the Resignation of
Sir ROBERT WALPOLE.

1737—1742.

CHAPTER THE FIFTIETH:

1737—1738.

Historical Deduction of the commercial Treaties between Spain and England, relating to America.—Spanish Depredations.—Meeting of Parliament.—Debate on the Reduction of the Army.—Resolution, prohibiting the Publication of Debates.

HITHERTO the minister had maintained the grand system of policy, which he had laid down as necessary for the support of the protestant succession, and for the maintenance of internal tranquillity, which he justly viewed as paramount to all other considerations; and it may be confidently asserted, without the imputation of partiality, that to his firmness and address, Great Britain was *solely* indebted for a longer period of peace, than had been ever experienced since the revolution. The advantages which resulted from this system were incalculable. But the nation was fated with so great a blessing, and the time was now arrived, when the violence of party, the clamours of merchants, the dreams of heroic grandeur, and the horror of national

national degradation, overcame the repugnance of the minister, and plunged England into war.

In consequence of having first discovered the new world, and by virtue of an investiture from Pope Alexander the Sixth to Ferdinand the Catholic, Spain assumed an exclusive right to all the continent of America. The other nations of Europe, however, did not acquiesce in this chimerical claim, and Portugal, in particular, made a settlement in the Brasils, which the Spaniards could not prevent. But when Philip the Second acquired possession of Portugal, Brasil fell under his dominion. Having thus obtained possession of the only colony in America which had at that time been occupied by another power, he maintained with greater weight his exclusive right; and so formidable was his naval force, that all attempts made by the English, in the reign of Elizabeth, to settle and trade in South America, were rendered ineffectual. When the naval power of Spain declined, by the defeat of the Armada, and when the vast fabric of her empire began to moulder away under the feeble successors of Philip the Second, the Dutch, French, and English formed settlements on the continent and islands of America. But long after the English had made permanent establishments in America, Spain did not renounce her original title, and even in times of peace, hostilities seldom ceased in the West Indies*.

At length in 1667, a treaty was concluded between England and Spain, which, though loosely worded, was a tacit acknowledgment of the British possessions in America.

This treaty, the eighth article alone excepted, related solely to Europe, but was afterwards wrested by the partisans of the Spanish war, as relating no less to America. It allowed freedom of navigation and commerce, in all places where commerce was before carried on, and is principally remarkable for permitting the liberty of searching merchant ships, sailing near the ports and in the seas belonging to the respective countries, and of confiscating contraband goods, which expression alluded to arms or ammunition, and was principally intended to prevent the English ships from supplying the states of Barbary with military stores. But as the treaty was confirmed and referred to

Chapter 50.
1737 to 1738.

Exclusive
claims of
Spain to
America.

Settlements
of other na-
tions.

Treaties with
England.

* For this inquiry I have principally consulted two able and perspicuous papers, drawn up by Horace Walpole. (1.) Deduction on the depredations between Great Britain and Spain, the Causes of them, and Hints for Re-

medies." (2.) "Considerations relating to the Navigation and Commerce of Great Britain in America, with respect to the Treaties with Spain, and the Depredations of the Guarda Costas." Walpole Papers.

Period VII.
1737 to 1742.

by all subsequent contracts, it gave occasion to the searching of ships, by the Spanish guarda costas in the American seas; an article which afterwards occasioned the violent disputes on both sides, that finally terminated in the Spanish war. This compact was introductory to a more explicit treaty in 1670, which seems to have been the first by which Spain formally acknowledged the right of any other nations to part of the new world.

The treaty of 1670 solely relates to America; and besides confirming to the English, the right of sovereign dominion of all lands in the West Indies, then possessed by them, regulates, in the most specific terms, the mode of intercourse between the two nations in that quarter. The 9th article forbids the respective subjects of each nation from sailing or trading with the colonies or dominions of the other in the West Indies, yet permits such navigation and commerce to be exercised according to a licence, granted by either sovereign.

The letter and spirit of this treaty were at direct variance with each other; the letter prohibited and the spirit encouraged a mutual trade between the two nations. For although the express terms prohibited all commerce with the Spanish ports in the West Indies, yet a great facility was given to the mutual intercourse between the two nations, by the formal permission, that English ships should be allowed to put into Spanish harbours, if forced by storms or other inconveniences, and continue there until they had refreshed themselves, and refitted, without giving notice to the governor, unless they were three or four together. Notwithstanding also the right and pre-eminence which the Spaniards claimed to the American seas, care was to be taken, that the liberty of navigation should not be disturbed. These stipulations incontestably prove that the Spaniards were inclined to favour the English, by conniving at, though they did not permit the trade, and such were the effects of this memorable treaty.

Claims of
search.

In virtue of those treaties, the Spaniards claimed a right, which they continually exercised, of searching the British merchant ships which passed near their American ports.

Trade indi-
rectly per-
mitted.

From the conclusion of 1670, to the death of Charles the Second of Spain, a strict friendship and union subsisted between the two crowns, both in Europe and America, and a flourishing, although illicit trade, was, by the connivance and indulgence of Spain, carried on between the English and Spanish plantations. The reason for this favourable treatment is evident; the great opposition and rivalry which then subsisted between France and Spain, and the desire of France to become mistress of the Low Countries, inclined Spain

to

to consider the English as her most useful friends, and the most capable of protecting or incommoding, by their maritime force, her foreign dominions. It was no wonder, therefore, that the Spaniards not only strictly observed their treaties, but even extended their indulgence, with respect to trade, farther than could be claimed by specific stipulations.

It was easy to foresee that the accession of a prince of the house of Bourbon to the throne, would affect the British trade to Spanish America. The consequences of this event would have been immediately visible, had not the war of the succession, in which Spain became the theatre of bloody hostilities, rivetted the attention of Philip the Fifth to his European dominions. But he was no sooner firmly established on the throne, than he turned his views to the American trade. The treaty of commerce which was concluded at the peace of Utrecht, between Great Britain and Spain, introduced a material alteration in the intercourse between the two nations. The 9th article of the treaty of 1670, which granted permission of trade to the ports and places in the West Indies, with the licence of the sovereign, was annulled; a contract, commonly called the *asiento* treaty, for supplying the Spanish colonies with a certain number of negroes, was granted to the South Sea company, for thirty years, with the privilege of annually sending a single ship of a certain burthen to Spanish America, laden with European merchandise. Excepting these alterations, the treaties of 1667 and 1670 were confirmed, and although those treaties were broken during the two short wars which took place between Spain and England in 1718 and 1727, yet as they were renewed by the quadruple alliance, and the treaty of Seville, the trade to America was nominally placed, in all other respects, upon the same footing as it stood under Charles the Second of Spain.

It soon, however, appeared new principles were adopted in the Spanish counsels, exactly the reverse of their former proceedings. The letter of the American treaty was now followed, and the spirit by which it was dictated abandoned. Although England still enjoyed the liberty of putting into the Spanish harbours, for the purpose of refitting and provisioning, yet they were far from enjoying the same advantages of carrying on a friendly and commercial intercourse. They were now watched with a scrupulous jealousy, strictly visited by *guarda costas*, and every effectual means adopted to prevent any commerce with the colonies, excepting what was allowed to the annual ship. The cause of this alteration was evident. Spain was governed by a sovereign connected with France by blood and policy; deprived of the Netherlands, she no longer considered England as her natural ally, and was not interested to obtain her friendship by commercial sacrifices.

Chapter 50.

1737 to 1738.

The *asiento*.

Origin of disputes.

Period VII. fices. The influence of these considerations was occasionally suspended, during the temporary misunderstandings between Spain and France. At those periods, a more friendly intercourse was connived at, and this variation in the policy of Spain gave rise to a variety of misconstructions.

1737 to 1742.

Illicit trade.

From the long continuance of this trade, the British merchants began to consider it as a prescriptive right, and not matter of indulgence, and were unwilling to renounce so profitable a branch of commerce, which so many of them pursued in an open and daring manner. They continually put into the Spanish harbours, under pretence of refitting and refreshing; and in many places almost publicly disposed of European merchandise, in exchange for gold and silver. Other vessels sailing near their ports and harbours, were repaired to by smugglers, or sent their long boats towards the shore, and dealt with the natives.

The Spaniards complained that the *asiento* * annual ship, was followed by several other vessels which moored at a distance, and as it disposed of its cargo, continually supplied it with fresh goods. That by those means, and by the clandestine trade which the English carried on, they almost solely supplied the colonies. The fair of Panama, once the richest of the world, where the Spanish merchants were accustomed to exchange gold and silver for European merchandise, had considerably fallen, and they monopolised the commerce of America.

It was no wonder, therefore, that the *guarda costas*, and other armed vessels, made vigorous exertions to prevent this illicit traffic, and that some illegal captures were made, some occasional acts of violence and cruelty committed, which the distance from Europe, the insolence of the English sailors, the delays of the Spanish tribunals, and the interest which the governors had in declaring the vessels confiscated, because they had a share in the cargo, rendered frequent redress of grievances extremely difficult, if not impracticable. The merchants who suffered made violent clamours, overrated their losses, and exaggerated the accounts of insult and barbarity committed by the Spaniards.

Volumes and volumes have been written by the English and Spaniards on the subject of these depredations: but as each side endeavoured to pervert facts, and gave different constructions to the most simple expressions, the dispute could never be finally settled. The state of these differences, and the difficulty of adjusting them, are well explained in a few words by Keene, in a letter to the duke of Newcastle:

* Desormeaux Histoire d'Espagne, tom. 5, p. 448.

“ Upon

" Upon the whole, the state of our dispute seems to be, that the commanders of our vessels always think, that they are unjustly taken, if they are not taken in *actual* illicit commerce, even though proofs of their having loaded in that manner be found on board of them; and the Spaniards on the other hand presume, that they have a right of seizing, not only the ships that are continually trading in their ports, but likewise of examining and visiting them on the high seas, in order to search for proofs of fraud, which they may have committed; and till a medium be found out between these two notions, the government will always be embarrassed with complaints, and we shall be continually negotiating in this country for redress, without ever being able to procure it *."

Chapter 30.
1737 to 1738.

At the same time that the question of Spanish depredations was agitated, other differences subsisted between England and Spain. The right of cutting logwood in the bay of Campeachy, and collecting salt in the island of Tortuga, was called in question; and some disputes arose in regard to the limits of Carolina and Georgia. Geraldino, the Spanish agent in London, had delivered a strong memorial, claiming part of those colonies which lay contiguous to Florida; and the demand was made in such violent terms, that the ministers were apprehensive of an attack on the province of Georgia, and accordingly a battalion of troops was ordered to embark from Gibraltar for America †.

Contested
claims.

Though Elizabeth Farnese had procured the throne of Naples and Sicily for Don Carlos, she was dissatisfied with the peace. She still aspired to the possession of Parma and Tuscany, which she considered as hereditary possessions; and when on the death of John Gaston, the last sovereign of the house of Medicis, Tuscany devolved on the duke of Lorraine, she beheld his succession with an unfavourable eye: she even made overtures to England, and insinuated, that if assistance was effectually granted, Spain should relinquish all claims on Gibraltar and Minorca, and accommodate all commercial differences, to the full satisfaction of England. But this overture, which tended to plunge Europe into a new war, being rejected, the queen of Spain was still more irritated, and continued to maintain powerful armaments by sea and land. In conformity to orders, sent from the court of Madrid, the guarda costas became more vigilant and severe than ever; and repeated instances of their violence were transmitted to England.

Increasing
misunder-
standing.

Depreda-
tions.

* Benjamin Keene's dispatch to the duke of Newcastle, Madrid, December 13th, 1737. Walpole Papers.

† The duke of Newcastle, to Benjamin Keene, September 13th, 1737. Walpole Papers.

Period VII.

1737 to 1742.

Complaints
of the mer-
chants.

October 11.

November.

Meeting of
Parliament.

January 24.

A petition was accordingly presented to the king, by a large body of merchants trading to the West Indies, complaining of these depredations, and stating specific cases of illegal captures and confiscations. The king referred this petition to the cabinet council, before whom the merchants were heard. In consequence of their evidence, the duke of Newcastle drew up a spirited memorial, shewing the nature of the trade, and giving such an explanation of the treaties of 1667 and 1670, on the due understanding of which the affair ultimately rested, as appeared to justify the complaints of the British traders, and to criminate the conduct of the Spaniards. This memorial, and the merchants' petition, were sent to Mr. Keene, with orders to present it to the king of Spain. The memorial, after repeating the various applications which had been ineffectually made for restitution of ships and effects unjustly seized, and demanding satisfaction for the depredations and cruelties committed by the guarda costas, required the king of Spain to give effectual orders for punishing the persons guilty of these atrocities, and for granting immediate reparation to his subjects, and concluded by observing, that if, contrary to expectation, these instances should not have the desired effect, the king would be obliged to procure for his subjects that satisfaction which they had a right to demand, by virtue of subsisting treaties, and the law of nations. Mr. Keene presented this memorial on the 10th of December; to which Philip replied, that he would do all in his power to preserve the friendship with the king of England. Notwithstanding the pressing importunities of Mr. Keene, who declared that nothing but immediate restitution and exemplary punishment could give satisfaction, the answer was not returned before the meeting of parliament. It also appeared, that the Spanish court did not view the subject in the same light as had been represented by the English cabinet, and controverted many positions advanced in the memorial.

Such was the state of the disputes between England and Spain, when parliament was assembled. The speech from the throne was unusually short. After recommending the dispatch of public business with prudence and expedition; and ordering the estimates for the current expenditure to be laid before the house, the king trusted that the zeal, affection, and due regard which the commons had shewn in supporting his government and the public safety, would induce them to make the necessary provisions for the honour, peace, and security of his crown and kingdom. He then concluded, by exhorting the house to lay aside all heats and animosities which might unnecessarily obstruct the sessions. The address, after condoling with the king, on his and the nation's irreparable loss, by the death of the queen, assured him

him that they would avoid all heats and animosities, and effectually raise the necessary supplies; and in gratitude for the regard which his majesty had always shewn for the liberties and privileges of his subjects, would testify their affection and zeal for the support of his government, and the preservation of the constitution*. Although little objection could be made, either to the speech or to the address, it did not, however, pass without some petulant remarks from Shippen and Sir William Wyndham.

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1737 to 1738.

The determined aim of opposition was to increase the misunderstanding with Spain to such a degree, as to render the adjustment of the disputes impracticable, and by inflaming the nation with exaggerated accounts of Spanish cruelties and insults, to compel the minister to enter into a war, which they considered as the probable means of obtaining his removal.

Views of opposition.

The principal views of opposition being directed to involve the nation in war, they gave a striking instance of their inconsistency and petulance, by resisting, with unusual warmth, the motion for maintaining 17,400 men, and proposing that the army should be reduced to 12,000. Besides the common topics of declamation, usually urged against a standing army, as obnoxious to the constitution, contrary to the principles on which the revolution was founded, and intended to support the system of corruption and arbitrary power; the debate took a new and unexpected turn. Shippen, with a view to cast an odium on the authors of the revolution, and to prove that the liberties of the people had been better secured before, than since that period, affected to date the rise of a standing army in Britain, from the ninth year of William; accused the Whigs who should vote for this question, of having deserted the principles of their ancestors; and made a warm panegyric on the Tories, for having been uniformly steady in their adherence to the true principles of the British constitution.

Debates on the reduction of the army.

Feb. 3.

In reply to these observations, the minister undertook to defend the consistency of the Whigs who voted for the question. He made a judicious distinction between an army composed entirely of British subjects, commanded by gentlemen of the best families, depending for its very being on the annual consent of parliament, and between one of foreign mercenary troops, composed of the lowest populace, and commanded by men of no families or fortunes. After declaring that such an army, so far from endangering the constitution, tended rather to preserve it against faction and

Walpole's speech.

* Journals.

4 C 2

disaffection,

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1737 to 1742.

disaffection, and contributed to protect the people against domestic rapine and foreign invasion; he stated the reasons for keeping up a body of troops, and particularly dwelt on that which arose from the number of persons disaffected to the government. He artfully endeavoured to confound the Tories with the Jacobites, and to consider all those who opposed government, as inclined to the Pretender, and particularly alluded to Shippen.

"Suppose Sir," he said, "we have at present nothing to fear from any foreign enemy, yet it cannot be said we are in absolute security, or that we have nothing to fear. There is one thing I am afraid of, and it is, indeed, the only thing, I think, we have at present to fear. The fear I mean, is that of the Pretender: Every one knows there is still a pretender to his majesty's crown and dignity; there is still a person who pretends to be lawful and rightful sovereign of these kingdoms; and what makes the misfortune more considerable, there are still a great number of persons in these kingdoms so much deluded by his abettors, as to think the same way. These are the only persons who can properly be called disaffected, and they are still so numerous, that though this government had not a foreign enemy under the sun, the danger we are in from the Pretender, and the disaffected part of our own subjects, is a danger which every true Briton ought to fear, a danger which every man who has a due regard for our present happy establishment, will certainly endeavour to provide against, as much as he can.

"I am sorry to see, Sir, that this is a sort of fear, which a great many amongst us endeavour to turn into ridicule; and for that purpose they tell us, that though there are many of our subjects discontented and uneasy, there are but very few disaffected: I must beg leave to be of a different opinion, for, I believe, most of the discontents and uneasinesses that appear among the people, proceed originally from disaffection. No man of common prudence will profess himself openly a Jacobite; by so doing, he not only may injure his private fortune, but he must render himself less able to do any effectual service to the cause he has embraced, therefore there are but very few such men in the kingdom. Your right Jacobite, Sir, disguises his true sentiments; he roars out for revolution principles; he pretends to be a great friend to liberty, and a great admirer of our ancient constitution; and under this pretence, there are numbers who every day endeavour to sow discontents among the people, by persuading them that the constitution is in danger, and that they are unnecessarily loaded with many and heavy taxes. These men know that discontent and disaffection, are like wit and madness, they are separated by thin partitions; and therefore they hope, if they can once
render

render the people thoroughly discontented, it will be easy for them to render them disaffected. These are the men we have most reason to be afraid of. They are, I am afraid, more numerous than most gentlemen imagine, and I wish I could not say they have been lately joined, and very much assisted by some gentlemen, who, I am convinced, have always been, and still are, very sincere and true friends to our present happy establishment.

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"By the accession of these new allies, as I may justly call them, the real but concealed Jacobites have succeeded even beyond their own expectation; and therefore I am not at all ashamed to say I am in fear of the Pretender. It is a danger I shall never be ashamed to say I am afraid of; because it is a danger we must always be more or less exposed to; and, I believe the less number of regular forces we keep up, the more we shall always be exposed to this danger."

Sir John Hynde Cotton replied; "Sir, I do own it gives me a good deal of surprise, to hear gentlemen who act upon revolution principles, talk so utterly inconsistent with what was the language of the Whigs in former times. Sir, I know not what Whigs the honourable gentleman has been acquainted with, but I have had the honour and happiness to be intimate with many gentlemen of that denomination: I have likewise, Sir, read the writings of many authors who have espoused these principles; I have sat in this house during the most material debates that have happened between them and the Tories; and I can declare from my own experience, that I never knew one who acted on true Whig principles, vote for a standing army in time of peace. What the principles of the Whigs in former days were, I can only learn from reading or information; but I have heard of Whigs who were against all unlimited votes of credit: I have heard of Whigs who looked upon open corruption as the greatest curse that could befall any nation: I have heard of Whigs who esteemed the liberty of the press to be the most valuable privilege of a free people, and triennial parliaments, the greatest bulwark of their liberties; and I have heard of a Whig administration who have resented injuries done to the trade of the nation, and have revenged insults offered to the British flag. These, Sir, are the principles, if I am rightly informed, that once characterised the true Whigs. Let gentlemen apply these characters to their present conduct, and then, laying their hands upon their hearts, let them ask themselves if they are Whigs? *"

Sir John
Hynde Cot-
ton.

In reply, the minister again adverted to the danger from the Pretender's party, and he insinuated that the arts used by the discontented

Walpole's
reply.

* Chandler.

Whigs

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1737 to 1742.

Whigs to set the people against the government, aided that cause: "For the faction," he said, "which is in the interest of the person who disputes his majesty's title to the crown, always presumes, that whoever is against the administration, is against the establishment likewise; and nothing has more contributed to keep up the spirit of that party, than their industriously propagating that doctrine. This is the true reason that they look upon the lenity of that government as the effect of its weakness, and that they attribute the indulgence they meet with to our fears. This is the true reason why they endeavour to improve to their advantage every accident that happens to the nation, though, perhaps, it is very distant from their purpose, and fell out contrary to their hopes. This is the reason why, on the late melancholy event * that afflicted the nation, their hopes revived, their cabals were set on foot, and every tool of their party was employed in their consultations, to know how to bring about their favourite point. There are many in our galleries now who know what I have said to be true, and if they had the privilege of speaking here, could, if they pleased, convince us how improper the proposed reduction is, while such a spirit subsists in the kingdom.

"I have known a time when gentlemen acted on true Whig principles; and at that time they seemed to be of opinion, that the best, if not the only way to secure us from popery and arbitrary power, was by securing the present establishment of the crown in his majesty's person and family. They were then of opinion, that this was best done by keeping up a regular body of forces; and I should be glad to know if the same reasons do not subsist now as did then, or if they who are the enemies of our present establishment, have been weakened by the opposition of these gentlemen to the administration †."

Debate resumed.

After a reply from Pulteney, and a few unimportant speeches, the debate appeared to be finally concluded, and as no division took place, the triumph on the side of the minister seemed complete. But the altercation was renewed on a subsequent day by the imprudence and petulance of some of the most violent among the Whigs, who were irritated at the assertions advanced by the Tories, that the maintenance of a standing army was inconsistent with the true principles of Whiggism.

Colonel Mordaunt's speech.

The report being made by the chairman of the committee of supply, the estimate for the regiment to be sent to Georgia, was objected to; colonel Mordaunt very injudiciously deviated from the great distinctions which the minister

* Alluding to the queen's death.

† Chandler.

had

had laid down between those who promoted the cause of the Pretender, and those who supported the protestant succession, and introduced the more narrow distinction of Whig and Tory. He said, "I have always gloried in being thought a Whig; I hope I shall never by my behaviour, either in this house, or without doors, give the least occasion to the world to think otherwise of me; and for this very reason, I am for keeping up an army, because *I think the keeping up an army absolutely necessary for supporting the Whig interest*, and preserving the peace and quiet of the people. In every dispute that has happened of late years about our army, I have looked upon the question to be chiefly, *whether Whig or Tory should prevail?* And as I have always thought, as I believe every unprejudiced Whig in the kingdom thinks, *that if the army should be disbanded, or very much reduced, the Tory interest would prevail*; therefore, I have generally been against such reductions, and always shall be cautious of agreeing to any such proposition. Nay, I am so firmly attached to the Whig interest, that if I should think four times the number of troops absolutely necessary for supporting that interest, I would be for keeping up a standing army four times as numerous as that we have now on foot."

These injudicious assertions infused a new spirit into the anti-ministerial Whigs. Lord Polwarth, in a sensible and animated speech, justified the Whigs who opposed government, and explained the nature of the old Whig principles. He endeavoured to prove that the question did not turn on distinguishing who were Whigs and who were Tories, but simply according to their present behaviour and political conduct; from thence he insinuated, that the ministerial party, who affected to distinguish themselves by the appellation of Whigs, acted in contradiction to the principles of that party, and were in reality Tories; and that those whom he invidiously styled Tories, while they were directed and actuated by this principle, were in reality Whigs. After making these observations, he added, "I am apt to suspect that my honourable friend calls this the Whig interest, and if so, I shall readily agree with him, that what he calls the Whig interest, being what I call the Tory interest, cannot be supported without a standing army. This may be a prevailing argument with him for being against any reduction, but it is an argument that has quite a different influence with me; for I think no interest, nor any party of men, ought to be supported, if a standing army becomes necessary for their support*." Neither the minister nor any of his adherents, took any share in these frivolous altercations, which only tended to the unnecessary prolongation of the debate. After speeches from Sir

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Lord Polwarth's reply.

* Chandler.

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Misrepresentations of
authors.

Thomas Saunderfon, treasurer to the prince of Wales, who answered lord Polwarth, and from Lyttleton and Pitt, in favour of the reduction, the motion for reducing the army was negatived by 249 against 164.

I have thought it necessary to enlarge on this debate, and to particularize the part taken by the minister, as well because it proves that the address which Walpole had employed to render the Tories odious, by confounding them with the Jacobites, had not been unsuccessful, as because the substance of the speech has been shamefully misrepresented by some modern writers, who have indirectly attributed to Walpole, expressions used by others which he never employed, and have totally mistaken the spirit and meaning of his arguments*.

The

* The accounts of this debate given by Smollett and Belsham, are here subjoined, to shew that Smollett has misrepresented the debate, and how carelessly Belsham has copied his narrative, and added his own errors.

SMOLLETT.

"The adherents of the minister fairly owned, that if the army should be disbanded, or even considerably reduced, the *Tory interest* would prevail: that the present number of forces was absolutely necessary to maintain the peace of the kingdom, which was filled with clamour and discontent, as well as to support the *Whig interest*; and that they would vote for keeping up four times the number, should it be found expedient for that purpose. The members in the opposition replied, that this was a severe satire on the ministry, whose conduct had given birth to such a spirit of discontent. They said it was in effect a tacit acknowledgment, that what they called the *Whig interest* was no more than an inconsiderable party, which had engrossed the administration by indirect methods, which acted contrary to the sense of the nation, and depended for support upon a military power, by whom the people in general were starved, and consequently enslaved. They affirmed, that the discontent of which the ministry complained, was in effect owing to that very standing army, which perpetuated their taxes, and hung over their heads as the instruments of arbitrary power and oppression. Lord Polwarth explained the nature of *Whig* principles, and demonstrated that the party which distinguished itself by this appellation, no longer retained the maxims by which the *Whigs* were originally characterised. Sir John Hynde Cotton, who spoke with the courage and freedom of an old English baron, declared he never knew a member of

BELSHAM.

The ministry scrupled not to affirm, "That if the army was disbanded, the *Tory interest* would quickly predominate: that the kingdom was filled with clamour and discontent, which a standing military force only could effectually suppress: that the support of the *Whig interest* demanded the maintenance of this force; and it was hoped and presumed the house would triple the number, if adjudged necessary for this purpose." The members of the opposition replied, in their accustomed strain of *vain reasoning*, "that this vindication contained in it a sentence of self-condemnation, for to what cause could the spirit of clamour and discontent be ascribed, but to the conduct of the ministry? and it was from their own acknowledgment clear, that what they were pleased to style the *Whig interest*, was, in fact, an inconsiderable party, which had engrossed the power of government by indirect and unconstitutional methods, which acted contrary to the sense of the nation, and which depended for support upon that very military force which was the grand source of the national discontent, which perpetuated the national taxes, and which menaced the national liberties with destruction. The claim of the ministry and their adherents in the house to the appellation of *Whigs*

The Spanish affairs so much occupied the public attention, that all other considerations were totally overlooked. Had not this been the case, a resolution made this session, would have attracted public notice, and have incurred the censure of those writers who affect a high regard for the liberty of the press. I allude to the enforcement of the standing order of the house, prohibiting the publication of the debates while the house was sitting, and the extension of that prohibition to the recess. The speaker observed, he saw with concern, that an account of their proceedings was inserted in the newspapers, and other periodical publications, by which means the speeches were liable to great misrepresentations, and he hoped the house would find some method of preventing this abuse. Sir William Yonge, Sir William Wyndham, and Winington, agreed with the speaker on the propriety of this measure. Pulteney enforced the necessity of putting a stop to the practice so justly complained of. He was of opinion, that no appeals should be made to the public concerning the proceedings of the house. He urged, that to print speeches, even if they should not be misrepresented, was making the speakers accountable without doors, for what they said within. He then declared, that however anxious to check this scandalous practice, he was unwilling that it should be done in such a manner as might affect the liberty of the press, or appear as if the house claimed a privilege to which it was not entitled. That although he had no doubt it was in the power of that house to punish printers for publishing an account of their proceedings, even during the recess, yet as that practice had been long connived at, he did not wish to punish any past offences, and thought it sufficient to pass resolutions which might deter in future. He urged, that such a resolution would not affect any person who should print an account of their proceedings when the parliament should be dissolved, and alluded to the history of the parliament which had been published in 1713, the author of which, he observed, had never been called to account by either house of parliament. He added,

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of that house, who acted on true Whig principles, vote for a standing army in time of peace, &c." History of England, vol. 3. p. 5.

Smollett imputes to the *adherents of the minister*, expressions which were only used by one individual member, who was not in administration; and Belsham, omitting the words *adherents of*, and putting only *the ministry*, leaves the reader to suppose, that Walpole himself, or some of the ministry, had been so absurd as to declare, that a standing army was necessary to support the Whig interest, and that if the army was disbanded, the Tory interest would prevail.

Whigs, was warmly disputed; and Sir John Hynde Cotton declared, that a genuine Whig could never vote for a standing army in time of peace, &c." This author has substituted, of his own authority, *frequent parliaments*, for *triennial parliaments*, the expression used both in Chandler and Smollett. Memoirs of the Brunswick Family, vol. 1. p. 372.

Period VII. 1737 to 1742. that parliaments, when they do amiss, ought to be arraigned with freedom; he hoped this parliament would not deserve it, but if it did, he should be sorry that any resolutions were entered into which might prevent its being represented in its proper colours. The minister, he trusted, would agree with him in this opinion; and he hoped that the house would never stretch their privileges so far as to cramp the freedom of writing on public affairs. "But this consideration," he concluded, "can never affect the resolution which gentlemen propose to come to now. We have rather been too remiss in not putting a stop to this scandalous practice that has been long complained of. I always thought that these pamphlets containing our debates, were circulated by encouragement, and at the expence of government; for, till the honourable gentleman who spoke last save one (Mr. Winnington) mentioned the magazines in the manner he did, I have still been used to look on the publishing them as a ministerial project; for I imagined that it being found impracticable to make the people buy and read the Gazetteer by itself, it was contrived so that the writings of the other party, being printed in the same pamphlet, it might be some invitation to the public to look into the Gazetteer, and I dare say, Sir, the run which the magazines have had, has been entirely owing to this stratagem. The good and the bad are printed together, and people are by this means drawn in to read both. But I think it is now high time to put a stop to the effects they may have, by coming to a resolution that may at least prevent any thing being published during the time of our sitting as a house, which may be imposed upon the world as the language and words of gentlemen who perhaps never spoke them."

The observations of the minister, and his reply to these invectives, which had little reference to the subject, was manly and dignified, and bears all the internal marks of authenticity.

"Sir, you have with great justice punished some persons for forging the names of gentlemen on the backs of letters; but the abuse now complained of is, I conceive, a forgery of a worse kind; for it tends to misrepresent the sense of parliament, and impose upon the understanding of the whole nation. It is but a petty damage that can arise from a forged frank, when compared with the infinite mischiefs that may be derived from this practice. I have read some debates of this house, Sir, in which I have been made to speak the very reverse of what I meant. I have read others, wherein all the wit, learning, and argument, have been thrown into one side, and on the other, nothing but what was low, mean, and ridiculous; and yet when it comes to the question, the division has gone against the side which, upon the

the face of the debate, had reason and justice to support it. So that, had I been a stranger to the proceedings, and to the nature of the arguments themselves, I must have thought this to have been one of the most contemptible assemblies on the face of the earth. What notion, then, Sir, can the public, who have no other means of being informed of the debates of this house, than what they have from these papers, entertain of the wisdom and abilities of an assembly, who are represented to carry every point against the strongest and the plainest argument and appearances. However, Sir, as I believe gentlemen are by this time sensible of the necessity of putting a stop to this practice, it will be quite unnecessary for me to argue a point wherein we are all agreed. But I cannot help taking notice of one thing mentioned by the honourable gentleman who spoke last, since I was the person to whom he was pleased to appeal. He mentioned that the history of a whole parliament had been printed, and seemed to insinuate that people might make very free with parliaments. Really, Sir, I will be so free as to own, that I do know of such a pamphlet being printed: nay, I believe, I know a little of the author, and the publication. But at the same time, I know, Sir, that that was one of the worst houses of commons that ever this nation saw; that they had a design to introduce the Pretender; that they had approved of a scandalous peace, and after the most glorious war that was ever carried on; and had it not been for some very favourable circumstances, they would have set aside the present happy establishment in his majesty's person and family. I hope, Sir, no gentleman will find fault with any reflections that could be thrown out against such a house of commons; I hope, likewise, that no gentleman will pretend to draw any parallels betwixt their conduct and our's. But, Sir, besides these considerations, gentlemen are to reflect, that the parliament which was described in that history, had been dissolved before the history itself was published. And not only so, but there is a noble lord * in the other house, who can, if he pleases, inform gentlemen, that the author of that history was so apprehensive of the consequences of printing it, that the press was carried to his house, and the copies printed off there.

"This, I think, Sir, will be sufficient to shew, that the author did not think himself out of danger, even though the parliament was dissolved. But I am not for carrying things to such a length at present. It may be sufficient, if we come to a resolution to prevent the publication of any part of our proceedings during the recess, as well as the sitting of the parliament. As to what

* Probably lord Cobham.

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the honourable gentleman says, with regard to the magazines being published and distributed by order, and at the expence of government, I don't know if he was serious or not. If he was serious, he must have a very contemptible opinion of the understanding of those gentlemen, who have the honour to serve his majesty, if he imagines that they would be so weak as to propagate papers, every page almost of which had a direct tendency against their own interest. If any gentleman will take the trouble, which, I own, I very seldom do, to look into these magazines, he will find four pages wrote against the government for one that is in its favour; and generally the subject is of such a nature, as would be severely punished under any other government than our own. If the honourable gentleman was not serious, I think a more proper time might have been chosen for shewing his wit, than while we are considering of the means of putting a stop to a practice, which he himself, and every gentleman who spoke in this debate, allows so nearly to affect the dignity and privileges of this house. For my own part, Sir, I am extremely indifferent, what opinion some gentlemen may form of the writers in favour of the government. But, Sir, I shall never have the worse opinion of them for that; there is nothing more easy than to raise a laugh; it has been the common practice of all minorities when they were driven out of every other argument. I shall never be afraid to do what I think right, and for the service of his majesty and my country, because I may be laughed at. But really Sir, I will be so free as to say, that if the want of wit, learning, good manners, and truth, is a proper object of contempt and ridicule, the writers in the opposition seem to me to have a much better title to both, than those for the government. No government, I will venture to say, ever punished so few libels, and no government ever had provocation to punish so many. I could name a government in this country, under which those writings, which are now cried up, as founded upon the laws, and in the constitution, would have been punished as libels, even by the gentlemen who are now the warmest advocates for the liberty of the press, and for suffering the authors of those daily libels that appear in print, to pass with impunity. But I ask pardon for what I have said, that may appear foreign to the present consideration; I was led to it by what had been thrown out by the gentleman who spoke before."

It was then unanimously resolved, "that it is a high indignity to, and a notorious breach of the privilege of this house, for any news writer, in letters or other papers (as minutes, or under any other denomination) or for any printer or publisher, of any printed newspaper of any denomination, to presume to insert in the said letters or papers, or to give therein any account of the debates, or other proceedings of this house, or any committee thereof, as well during

during the recess, as the sitting of parliament ; and that this house will proceed with the utmost severity against such offenders *."

It is remarkable that this resolution, which at this time would be considered as a great infringement of the liberty of the press, and rouse the indignation of the public, passed without a single dissenting voice, and with little public animadversion. It is no less remarkable, that not one of our historical writers has taken the smallest notice of the debate, which is the reason why I have deemed it not improper to give a place in these memoirs, to a transaction of such great historical importance. This resolution was not followed by the smallest beneficial effects ; on the contrary, it tended only still farther to excite public curiosity, while it rendered truth more difficult of access. It compelled the compilers of periodical publications to adopt a covert method of giving the debates, which made it more easy to falsify them, and it is a well known fact, that after this period, the accounts became less authentic than before †. The Gentleman's and the London Magazine were at that period the principal vehicles of the parliamentary debates. The Gentleman's Magazine published the debates in the senate of Lilliput, under the names of Lilliput and Brobdingnag, and the London Magazine gave a journal of the proceedings and debates in a political club, with Roman appellations. Each miscellany afterwards explained these fictitious titles in advertisements affixed to the respective volumes.

Chapter 51.

1738.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-FIRST:

1738.

Proceedings in Parliament relative to the Spanish Depredations.—Petitions.—Examination of Witnesses.—Case of Jenkins.—Report of the Committee.—Debates thereon.—Firm and temperate Conduct of Walpole.—Resolutions of both Houses.

THE remainder of the session was principally devoted to the discussion of the Spanish depredations.

On the 3d of March, the minority commenced their attack. A petition,

Spanish depredations.

Petition of merchants.

* Chandler.

† Tindal.

prepared

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prepared with great art and asperity, from divers merchants, planters, and others, trading to and interested in the British plantations in America, was presented to the house by aldermen Perry, recapitulating all that had passed in consequence of former applications, and declaring that the Spaniards still continued their depredations, and carried them to a greater height than ever.

Debates.

This petition was referred to a committee of the whole house. Alderman Perry, who presented it, moved that the petitioners should be heard by themselves *and* counsel. The speaker having objected, as a point of form, that it never was the custom of the house to admit parties to be heard by themselves *and* counsel, proposed an amendment, by themselves *or* counsel. Sir John Barnard and Sir William Wyndham objected to this amendment, as no less captious and frivolous, than highly prejudicial to the petitioners; the minister said, "Sir, I must humbly beg leave to differ from both the honourable gentlemen. The judgment which we should form in this case, ought to be grounded on facts as they are fairly represented, not as they are artfully aggravated. Every gentleman, I believe, from his bare reflection on the injuries our merchants have received from Spain, feels within his breast an indignation arise, which there is no occasion to increase by the power of eloquence, or the arts of a lawyer. When gentlemen see an affair through the mist that passion raises before their eyes, it is next to impossible they should form a just judgment. I believe there is scarce any gentleman here, who is not acquainted with as much geography, and as much of the history, both of Britain and Spain, as may enable him, from a plain representation of facts, to judge whether the allegations in this petition be true or false. Now, Sir, are not the merchants themselves the most proper to give us this representation? Are they not most immediately interested in the facts? Where then, is the necessity of counsel? Or what occasion is there to work upon the passions, where the head is to be informed? I believe, Sir, every gentleman will find his heart as much affected by the artless accounts of the sufferers themselves, as by the studied rhetoric of the most eloquent counsel. However, Sir, I shall not take the liberty to make any motion on this head, but entirely submit it to gentlemen's consideration."

Walpole's
speech.

Willimot's
answer.

The answer of alderman Willimot to these moderate remarks, will prove the temper by which the party in favour of the war were actuated.

"Sir, I think the petitioners ought to have liberty to be heard, not only by themselves and counsel, but if it were possible that we could indulge them in other advantages, we ought to do it. To talk of working upon the passions!—Can any man's passions be wound up to a greater height, can any
man's

man's indignation be more raised, than every free-born Englishman's must be, when he reads a letter which I received this morning, and which I have now in my hand. This letter gives an account that seventy of our brave sailors are now in chains in Spain. Our countrymen in chains! and slaves to Spaniards! Is not this enough to fire the coldest? Is not this enough to rouse all the vengeance of national resentment? And shall we sit here debating about words and forms, while the sufferings of our countrymen call loudly for redress?" Notwithstanding these intemperate effusions, the house agreed to the amendment proposed by the speaker, that the committee should be instructed to admit the petitioners to be heard, if they thought fit, by themselves or counsel.

On the same day, other petitions were presented, and referred to a committee of the whole house, in the same manner as that of the merchants. Sir John Barnard, after inveighing against these unjust seizures and depredations, and stating the necessity of preventing them in future, moved for an address to the king, "That he would be graciously pleased to give directions for laying before the house, copies or extracts of the several petitions, representations, memorials, and all other papers relating to the Spanish depredations upon the British subjects, which had been presented to his majesty, or delivered to either of his majesty's principal secretaries of state since Midsummer last; together with copies or extracts of such memorials or representations, as had been made either to the king of Spain or his ministers, and the answers returned by them to the same; and together with copies or extracts of the letters written to his majesty's minister at Madrid, with the answers received from him, relating to the said depredations."

This motion brought on a long and warm debate, in which the cruelties and insults of the Spaniards, and the pusillanimity of the British cabinet, were equally exaggerated. The minister, ever anxious to avoid any violent resolutions, which might offend the irritable temper of the court of Madrid, and particularly to decline entering upon the question concerning the right claimed by the Spaniards, of searching for illicit goods, stated the difficulty and delicacy of his situation, either in opposing or concurring with the motion. By opposing it, he was in danger of becoming obnoxious to the public, and by his concurrence, might act against his own judgment, and the interests of the king, which are always inseparable from those of the nation. He then adverted to the danger of creating a misunderstanding between the crown and parliament, if the commons should call for papers, which should be deemed improper for communication. Although he was for treating all the claims of Spain as unfounded, yet he was apprehensive that such

Motion for
papers.

Walpole's
objections.

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such difficulties might arise in resisting them, as would require much address and wisdom to remove. The king had, by the most prudent methods of negotiation, endeavoured to reconcile the interests of the kingdom with its peace; and the present was the critical period when the effects of those negotiations were to take place.

He owned that the British merchants and seamen had been often treated most unjustly and inhumanly by the Spanish guarda costas, and that both the honour and interest of the nation were deeply concerned in obtaining reparation for such injuries, and a proper security in future; at the same time, he declared that recourse ought not to be had to arms, while there was any prospect of obtaining redress in a peaceable manner.

"It is without doubt," he said, "a very popular way of arguing, to talk highly of the honour, the courage, and the superior power of this nation; and, I believe, I have as good an opinion of the honour, courage, and power of this nation, as any man can, or ought to have; but other nations must be supposed to have honour as well as we, and all nations generally have a great opinion of their courage and power. If we should come to an open rupture with Spain, we might in all probability have the advantage; but victory and success do not always attend upon that side which seems to be the most powerful. Therefore, an open rupture, or declared war between two potent nations, must always be allowed to be an affair of the utmost importance to both; and as this may be the consequence of our present deliberations, we ought to proceed with great coolness, and with the utmost caution *."

He next recapitulated the late treaties and transactions with Spain, and endeavoured to prove, that the inflexibility of the Spaniards was owing to the perplexed state of affairs in Europe, since the treaty of Seville, which had prevented the meeting of the commissioners for finally adjusting the respective pretensions of the two countries. He observed, that the claims of the English were not considered, either at home or abroad, to be so clear as they were there represented. He attempted to shew, that the Spaniards had hitherto done as much to satisfy the English sufferers as could well be expected, that the distance between Madrid and the West Indies was considerable, that the Spanish governors were extremely insolent, and not subject to sufficient controul, and that therefore it was no wonder if the crown sometimes found difficulties in bringing them to reason.

He gave some instances of ships that had been unconditionally released

* Chandler.

by the Spaniards, of others, on giving security to stand trial whether they had been engaged in illicit trade; and he mentioned several whose claims were likely to be satisfied *.

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He did not, however, intend to oppose the communication of papers in general, but only of some, which if made public, might occasion much inconvenience. He frankly acknowledged, that the last answer from the Spanish court was unsatisfactory, and that if it should be communicated to the house, and from thence, as must unavoidably happen, to the public, the most fatal consequences might be produced. That notwithstanding the harshness of that answer, the ministry had sent to the court of Madrid some propositions which might tend to soften matters. He said, if they were not soon answered to the satisfaction of the king, he himself would move that every paper relating to Spain should be laid before the house, but that till that answer arrived, it would be improper to comply with the motion.

He concluded by moving as an amendment, the omission of "answers from the court of Spain, and the British minister at Madrid." This candid and moderate speech, which was peculiarly adapted to the temper of the house, who were not inclined to reject the whole motion, and which proved that he did not wish to protract the inquiry longer than prudence and policy directed, had a due effect. The temperate representation of the minister, ably enforced by Horace Walpole, Sir William Yonge, Henry Pelham, and Sir Charles Wager, prevailed over the more violent counsels of the opposition, though supported by all the eloquence and abilities of Pulteney, Sir John Barnard, and Sir William Wyndham. The original motion, as proposed by Pulteney, was negatived by a majority of 164 against 99, and the amendment, as proposed by the minister, carried without a division †.

And Amendment.

The triumphant majority with which this question was carried, was productive of no essential advantage to the cause which Walpole was so anxious to support. While the attempts were making to adjust the differences with Spain, and while the court of Madrid seemed inclined to make due reparation for the injuries complained of, Sir Thomas Fitzgerald, or, as he is usually called, Don Thomas Geraldino, the Spanish minister, was employed in fomenting the disturbances and inflaming the public discontents. He caballed with the leaders in opposition, and acquainted them with the secret information which his instructions or his correspondence enabled him to communicate. He did not hesitate to assert openly that the English ministry imposed upon the people, in pretending that the court of Spain would be

Carried.

Conduct of Geraldino.

* Tindal.

† Chandler.

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inclined to recede, in the smallest degree, from the claim of searching all ships which sailed near their coasts in America. His intemperance gave great advantages to opposition; and in the course of the debates in both houses, many facts were disclosed by the members of that party, which ought to have been confined to the cabinets. The ministry, having soon discovered by whose means they obtained possession of those facts, complained of his imprudence, and desired Mr. Keene to lay the indecency and consequences of his conduct before the court of Madrid. But Geraldino had frustrated the effects of these representations, by stating, that the views and principles, even of the minister himself, and the most pacific part of the English government, were absolutely inconsistent with every maxim of the Spanish monarchy, and all the security of its trade. This information found a ready belief at Madrid, and their ministers, through Geraldino's advice, became persuaded, that they could not be so effectually served as by fomenting and encouraging the discontents of the people of England against their government *.

Numerous
petitions.

Examination
of witnesses.

At this period the house was daily inundated with petitions and papers relating to the inhumanities committed upon the English prisoners taken on board of trading vessels. They represented these prisoners as not only insulted and pillaged, but compelled to work in the Spanish dock yards and fortifications, with irons upon their legs, subsisting upon loathsome provisions, and overrun with vermin, frequently tortured and imprisoned in dungeons. Several captains and other seamen were examined at the bar of the house, and if full credit be given to the witnesses, the facts were unquestionably proved; but their evidence must be received with great caution. They were not examined upon oath, and were not confronted with any testimony on the side of the Spaniards. They were induced by their own interests, and by the hopes of obtaining reparation, to exaggerate their injuries. They saw that it was popular to inveigh against the Spaniards, and were encouraged to render a disastrous tale more disastrous; they were taught to believe, that if they made good their allegations, the minister who had tamely suffered such oppressions would be removed, and that his successors would act with such vigour as to force the king of Spain to indemnify them for their losses and sufferings †.

The captains and seamen who appeared at the bar of the house, gave the most exaggerated accounts of the insults permitted and exercised by the Spaniards; and many related the most incredible tales of horror, which were implicitly believed, almost in proportion to their absurdity.

Case of
Jenkins.

Among those who were examined, and whose story seemed to make the

* Tindal.

† Ibid.

deepest impression, was one Jenkins: This man was captain of the Rebecca, a trading vessel; he sailed for Jamaica in the beginning of 1731, and was boarded by a guarda costa, and treated with much insult and indignity. In the account which was given at the time, by the periodical papers and the pamphlets of opposition, the Spanish captain is reported to have put the men to the torture, to have hanged up Jenkins three times, once with the cabin boy at his feet, and then to have cut off one of his ears, and bid him carry it to his king. On his arrival in England, Jenkins is said to have gone to court, and laid his case before the king, and as some compensation for his treatment, or to pacify him, to have been appointed captain of an East Indiaman*.

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This ridiculous story, which Burke justly calls, "*The Fable of Jenkins' ears*," seems to have made little impression at the time, but it was now revived with additional circumstances of cruelty and insult; and Jenkins was produced at the bar of the house of commons, to give an account of a transaction which had happened seven years before †. March 16.

According to contemporary accounts, after relating the transaction, with many additional circumstances of insult and barbarity, he displayed the ear, which he had preserved, as some assert, in a box, and others in a bottle, asserting, that after *tearing* it off, the Spaniard had said to him, "Carry it to your king, and tell his majesty that if he were present I would serve him in the same manner." His evidence is mentioned as a model of *noble simplicity*. One point, in particular, was ostentatiously circulated. Being asked by a member what he thought when he found himself in the hands of such a barbarian, he replied, "I recommended my soul to God, and my cause to my country." These words, and the display of his ear, *which, wrapt up in cotton, he always carried about him*, filled the house with indignation.

* Gentleman's Magazine for 1731. Craftsman.

† It was positively asserted in the contemporary publications, that Jenkins was examined at the bar of the house of commons, and gave the evidence mentioned in the text, and it is generally admitted as a fact; yet it is remarkable that no traces of his evidence are to be found in the Journals. The whole that is mentioned in the Journals are the two following passages:

16th March. "Ordered, That Captain

Robert Jenkins do attend this house immediately."

17th March. "Ordered, That Captain Robert Jenkins do attend, on Tuesday morning next, the Committee of the whole house, to whom the petition of divers merchants, planters, and others, trading to, and interested in, the British plantations in America, in behalf of themselves, and many others, is referred." But on Tuesday the 21st, there is no farther mention of Jenkins.

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Clamours of
the people.Report of the
Committee.

March 30.

Pulteney's
Motion.

The effect of this ridiculous story * on the nation at large, was proportionate to the impression of horror and vengeance it created in the house of commons. It was made the vehicle of popular frenzy, and so highly inflamed the public mind, that Pulteney declared in parliament, the very name of Jenkins would raise volunteers.

When the nation was irritated by these exaggerated accounts and unwarrantable artifices, to the highest degree, the business was resumed by the commons. On the 30th of March, alderman Perry submitted to a committee of the whole house, a report which was calculated to augment the general indignation. After the examinations of several witnesses, Murray, afterwards earl of Mansfield, was heard as counsel for the petition, and supported, with unusual eloquence, the justice of the complaints.

Pulteney then rose, and in a speech of great length, spirit, and perspicuity, expatiated on the amazing instances of cruelty, barbarity, and injustice, proved at the bar to have been exercised on the king's subjects; he stated the rights of the British nation, which had been controverted and infringed by the Spaniards, and on which he proposed to found his motion; the right of free navigation to every part of the American seas, provided the ships do not touch at any ports possessed by the Spaniards; the right of carrying all sorts of goods, merchandise, or effects, from one part of the British dominions to the other; to cut-logwood in the bay of Campeachy, and to gather salt on the island of Tortuga. He concluded, by proposing

* See Gentleman's Magazine for July 1736. Where it is said, that the *Spanish* Captain was a Lilliputian, (*English*) Renegado — London Magazine. — Chandler. — Smollett, vol. 3. p. 19. — Belsham, vol. 2. p. 3. — Bryan Edwards's History of the British West Indies, vol. 1. p. 144. Voltaire, who never spoils a

good story in the telling, says, "Le capitaine Espagnol avait saisi le vaisseau de Jenkins, mis l'équipage aux fers, fendu le nez et coupé les oreilles au patron. En cet état Jenkins se presenta au parlement, &c." Histoire de la Guerre de 1741.

Pope has thus ludicrously mentioned the incident.

"The Spaniards own they did a waggish thing,

"Who cropt our ears, and sent them to the king."

In spite of these authorities, I am inclined to give credit to the suggestion of Tindal, "that Jenkins lost his ear, or part of his ear, on another occasion, and pretended it had been cut off by the crew of a guarda costa." vol. 20. p. 372. It would be unjust to the Spaniards not to mention, in this place, a counter story, which was no less believed in Spain than the "fable of Jenkins's ears" in England. "Un Capitaine Anglois, après avoir, par un trait de perfidie, et sous prétexte de commerce, invité deux

gentilshommes Espagnols à bord de son vaisseau, les laissa sans manger pendant deux jours, pour leur extorquer une rançon; mais, comme cet expédient ne lui réussit pas, il coupa à l'un des deux les oreilles et le nez, et le força, le couteau sur le gorge, de les manger; procédé, qui, sans contredit, mettoit les Espagnols en droit d'user de représailles; aussi, en usèrent ils à la rigueur." Histoire du Ministère du chevalier Robert Walpole, tom. 3. p. 408.

a set

a set of resolutions, calculated to assert these rights in the most unequivocal and specific manner.

The minister saw and appreciated the deep impression which the speech had made upon the house, and the manner in which he answered it, plainly shewed the embarrassment under which he laboured. He said, he did not pretend to call in question any of the rights and privileges which the honourable gentleman had been pleased to enumerate; this nation had an indisputable title to them, no British subject would pretend to controvert any one of them; and he should be as zealous for defending them as the honourable gentleman himself. But though such was his opinion, yet he would not agree that they ought to be vindicated and asserted by the house in the manner now proposed, because no British subject could call them in question; and any resolutions made by that house would not bind foreign powers. He next contended, that the passing of such resolutions would be not only unnecessary but prejudicial. For although these rights were secured by the law of nations, or by solemn treaties, yet they had never been explicitly acknowledged by Spain, excepting in such general terms, and by such general words, as only conveyed an implied concession, in the same manner as we possessed Jamaica. But as these general words were as secure and indisputable as the most express declaration, he entreated the house not to pass any resolutions which would preclude the ministers from proposing or accepting any such general acknowledgments and concessions. The resolutions proposed would cramp the negotiations, now carrying on; if Spain did not accede to the specific terms, it would occasion a rupture between the two nations, and render peace unattainable, until one of the parties was wholly subdued. It would be as easy, he said, to force them to sign a carte blanche, as to compel them to make such particular concessions as were mentioned in the resolutions; and as the rights in dispute with Spain might be as fully secured by general words in a future treaty as by particular declarations, he saw no reason for precluding the possibility of such a treaty, which might attain all the ends proposed by the resolutions, and avoid all their inconveniencies.

"For this reason," he said, "I shall be against our coming to any peremptory resolutions, with respect to any of the particular rights the Spaniards now pretend to contest; but I shall most readily agree to any motion that can be proposed, for shewing it to be our opinion, that our merchants have fully proved their losses, and that the depredations that have been committed are contrary to the law of nations, contrary to the treaties subsisting between

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between the two crowns; in short, that they are every thing bad, and without the least pretence or colour of justice. This, I say, I shall most willingly agree to, because I think the petitioners have fully proved the allegations of their petition; I think they have fully proved, that the subjects of this kingdom have met with such treatment from the Spanish guarda costas, and governors in America, as deserves the highest resentment. But still, I think, if proper satisfaction and full reparation can be obtained by peaceable means, we ought not to involve the nation in a war, from the event of which we have a great deal to fear; and the utmost we can hope for from the most uninterrupted success, is a proper satisfaction for past injuries, and a proper security against our meeting with any such hereafter, both which we are bound to think there are still hopes of gaining by negotiation; because, if it had been otherwise, his majesty would certainly have acquainted us with it, and have desired us to provide for obtaining by force, what he saw was not to be otherwise obtained.*"

He concluded by offering an amendment, which adopted only the first sentence of the proposed resolutions, "That it is the natural and undoubted right of British subjects to sail with their ships on any part of the seas of America to and from any part of his majesty's dominions." After this sentence the minister proposed to insert, "That the freedom of navigation and commerce, which the subjects of Great Britain have an undoubted right to by the law of nations, and which is not in the least restrained by virtue of any subsisting treaties, has been greatly interrupted by the Spaniards, under pretences altogether groundless and unjust. That before and since the execution of the treaty of Seville, and the declaration made by the crown of Spain pursuant thereunto, for the satisfaction and security of the commerce of Great Britain, many unjust seizures and captures have been made, and great depredations committed by the Spaniards, which have been attended with many instances of unheard of cruelty and barbarity. That the frequent applications made to the court of Spain, for procuring justice and satisfaction to his majesty's injured subjects, for bringing the offenders to condign punishment, and for preventing the like abuses in future, have proved vain and ineffectual; and the several orders or cédulas, granted by the king of Spain, for restitution and reparation of great losses sustained, by the unlawful and unwarrantable seizures and captures made by the Spaniards, have been disobeyed by the Spanish governors, or totally evaded and eluded. And that these violences and depredations have been carried on to the great loss and damage of the

* Chandler.

subjects of Great Britain trading to America, and in direct violation of the treaties subsisting between the two crowns *."

These amendments occasioned a long and vehement debate, which, according to the opinion of a contemporary author, "is grossly misrepresented in the parliamentary collections of that time." The gentlemen in opposition had not studied the term of contraband goods with sufficient precision, and they confounded them with illicit goods. The difference between the intention and meaning of the treaty concluded with Spain in 1667, and that of 1670, was not sufficiently defined; the former relating to the European commerce, and the latter restricted solely to the American. Neither was there sufficient foundation for a house of parliament to assert the right which the English had of cutting logwood in the bay of Campeachy, and it was certain that that right had not only been warmly contested by the Spaniards in former negotiations, but had been tacitly given up by some of the English ministers, and the whole of it was absolutely inconsistent with the interest of the South Sea company. It was maintained by Sir Robert Walpole and his friends, during the course of the debate, that the resolutions moved for by him, contained all that could be reasonably expected from Spain at that time; and that whatever claims the English had to lands in the province of Jucutan, or to cut logwood in the bay of Campeachy, or to other privileges, either of possession or navigation, it could not be affected or weakened by the amendment; which, after a long and sharp debate †, was carried without a division. When the resolution, amended in the committee, was reported to the house by alderman Perry, the minority proposed that it should be re-committed, but the motion was negatived by 224 against 163 ‡. Then alderman Perry proposed, and carried an address, "beseeching the king to use his endeavours to obtain effectual relief for his injured subjects, and to convince the court of Spain that he could no longer suffer such constant and repeated insults and injuries, to the dishonour of his crown, and to the ruin of his trading subjects; assuring the king, that should his friendly instances for procuring justice, and for the future security of their navigation and commerce, which his people have an undoubted right to by treaties and the law of nations, fail of success, the house will effectually support his majesty in taking such measures as honour and justice shall make it necessary to pursue §."

The great object of the minister in moving his amendment, was to pre-

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Resolutions
of the Com-
mons.

Resolutions
of the Lords.

* Chandler, p. 204.

† Tindal, vol. 20. p. 374.

‡ Journals.

§ Ibid.

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vent any mention of not searching ships, which he well knew would never be agreed to by Spain. But he had no reason to boast of his victory, for on the same day, the house of lords, after a long debate, voted resolutions much stronger than those which passed the commons, and what rendered this circumstance more extraordinary was, that the ministerial party seemed to have almost adopted the arguments of the opposition, and to have employed all the violent expressions of those who wished to bring on a war. The lords not only asserted the undoubted right of Great Britain to navigate on the American seas, but also "to carry all sorts of goods and merchandise, or effects, from one part of his majesty's dominions to any other part thereof, and that no goods, being so carried are, by any treaty subsisting between the crowns of Great Britain and Spain, to be deemed or taken as contraband or prohibited goods; and that the searching of such ships, on the open seas, under pretence of their carrying contraband or prohibited goods, is a violation and infraction of the treaties subsisting between the two crowns *."

These resolutions were formed into an address, promising the most effectual support, should the king's instances fail of having a due effect on the crown of Spain.

The king sanctioned these strong resolutions by a no less strong reply: "I am sensibly touched with the many hardships and injuries sustained by my trading subjects in America, from the cruelties and unjust depredations of the Spaniards. You may be assured of my care to procure satisfaction and reparation for the losses they have already suffered, and security for the freedom of navigation for the future; and to maintain to my people the full enjoyment of all the rights to which they are entitled by treaty and the law of nations. I doubt not but I shall have your concurrence for the support of such measures as may be necessary for that purpose †."

Bill for securing trade.

May 5.

As the public mind became more and more exasperated against Spain, and as the pusillanimity of the minister became the constant object of popular invective, the opposition determined to exert one great effort to bring on immediate hostilities, and to preclude the minister from availing himself of the interval which was still left open for negotiation. Pulteney, who conducted this whole business with great address and ability, was the organ of the minority. He moved to bring in a bill under the plausible title of effectually securing and encouraging the trade to America. It was to revive part of two acts, passed in the reign of queen Anne, and in effect, if carried, it would have amounted to a declaration of war, and tended to involve the country

* Lords' Debates,

† Tindal, vol. 20. p. 377. Lords' Debates.

with all the commercial nations in Europe. The intention of the act was, to give the property of all prizes taken from the Spaniards, after a declaration of war, to the officers and seamen present in the action; head money, or £.5. for every Spaniard made prisoner at sea, was to be granted to the sailors; and the property of all places taken was to be vested, by the king's patent, in the captors.

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During its progress the minister attacked it with great strength of argument. He endeavoured to shew its impropriety at this juncture, and pointed out the injustice of particular parts. On the first clause he observed, "That as the bill then stood, if hostilities were immediately to commence against Spain, and a squadron of English ships were to take the whole Plate fleet or flotilla of the Spaniards, with all their register ships, it would become the property of the English seamen, though it was notorious that not one-fifth part of that treasure, in reality, belonged to the Spaniards, but was the property of the French, the Dutch, and other trading nations of Europe."

Opposed by
Walpole,
May 12.

To the clause for granting head money he made no objection; he thought it just and reasonable that the sailors in case of a war should have such encouragement, and declared that he would willingly concur in any motion for that purpose.

The third clause he conceived to be highly dangerous, because it would effectually preclude the conclusion of a safe and honourable pacification; as in all negotiations for peace, some places on both sides are usually restored to facilitate the accommodation, which could not be effected if the king, by letters patent, should part with the property to private owners. In opposition to this clause he urged, that the bill, if passed in the present form, would be attended with the total ruin of the British commerce in Europe. It must give so great an alarm to the French for their property, which is even greater than that of the Spaniards on board of the galleons, that they would not hesitate taking part with Spain, and joining their whole naval force to convoy the Spanish merchant fleet to the ports of Europe.

"But a more material consideration still remained; most of the French, Dutch, and Danish property at sea, was insured in England or Holland in time of peace, and therefore the loss, in fact, must fall upon the British and Dutch insurers, as they could have no pretext to indemnify the French and other nations for the losses they would sustain; so that the bill, if passed into a law, might ruin the Dutch as well as the British insurers."

He desired the house to consider, in such an event, what must be the case of the British merchants then residing in Spain, their persons, their ships,

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and

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and their properties, all which the Spaniards would certainly sequester. "What must the Dutch," said he, "think of such a bill? Or what power in Europe can be our hearty friend, should it, at this time, pass into a law*."

In the course of the debates many personal reflections, highly injurious to his character, were cast on the minister, and a bitter altercation arose between him and Pulteney, who was loudly called to order, and obliged to acknowledge, that the warmth of his temper had transported him to use some unguarded expressions, for which he testified his concern.

In answer to those who alledged he was afraid of a war, because peace was his only safety, Walpole observed, "It is but a mean excuse for a minister, when a wrong step is made in government, that he is not accountable for the events of measures that never were advised by him, and in which he was over-ruled by his superiors. I have always disdained those mean subterfuges; and with what face can I appear again in this house, if full and ample satisfaction is not made, or at least if we do not do our utmost to obtain it, either by fair and peaceable means, or by exerting all our strength, in case a war becomes necessary. If my country should call me to account, I would willingly take upon me the blame of every step that has been made by the government, since I had the honour to enter into the administration. As to the common notion of a minister's being afraid to enter upon a war, I do not understand upon what it can be grounded. For my part, I could never see any cause, either from reason or from my own experience, to imagine that a minister is not as safe in time of war, as in time of peace. Nay, if we are to judge by reason alone, it is the interest of a minister, conscious of any mismanagement, that there should be a war; because by a war, the eyes of the public are diverted from examining into his conduct; nor is he accountable for the bad success of a war, as he is for that of an administration†."

Thrown out,
May 15.
Prorogation
of parliament.

The bill was negatived by a large majority‡.

A few days after this debate, the session was closed by prorogation.

Thus was concluded this difficult session, in which the minister contrived to place the disputes with Spain on such a footing as to give an opening to an amicable negotiation, during the course of which, he trusted that a due mixture of vigour, moderation, and forbearance would induce the court of Madrid to agree to such conditions, as would satisfy the English nation, might restore harmony, and prevent a rupture. The resolutions of the house of commons were transmitted to Mr. Keene, to lay before the king of Spain;

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 369 and 370.

† Ibid.

‡ Journals.

letters of reprisals were offered to the merchants; a squadron of ten ships of the line sailed for the Mediterranean, under the command of admiral Haddock; many single ships were sent to America, and the infant colony of Georgia was supplied with troops and stores for resisting the Spaniards, who threatened to invade it from Saint Augustine. These precautions for defence and attack, were obviously calculated to give weight to the negotiation with Spain, and they had their due effect.

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CHAPTER THE FIFTY-SECOND:

1738—1739.

Difficulties attending the Negotiation with Spain.—Articles of the Convention.—Protest of Spain.—Parliamentary Proceedings.—Debates on the Convention.

THE remainder of the year was passed in attempts to adjust the differences between Spain and England.

Negotiations
with Spain.

There never was any negotiation which commenced with more unfavourable appearances, and was attended with greater difficulties. These difficulties principally arose from the punctilious and inflexible spirit of the Spanish court, the high expectations of the English nation, the discordant resolutions of the lords and commons, and the disputes between the crown of Spain and the South Sea company.

The first difficulty arose from the Spanish court, tremblingly alive to all discussions on points which related to their American possessions; for although Philip appeared well inclined to give full satisfaction for past depredations, and full security for freedom of navigation, which did not promote the illicit commerce, carried on with his subjects in America, or which did not infringe on his sovereignty; yet he could not be prevailed on to grant any specific proposition for not *searching* ships, either in the open seas, or hovering on their coasts, under the pretence of trading to and from the British plantations.

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The difficulty of managing so capricious a court, was increased by the high expectations of the English nation. The people, fired with enthusiasm, and inflamed by the exaggerated accounts of the Spanish depredations, wildly and imperiously clamoured for redress. They laid their demands of reparation at a very high rate; they required ample satisfaction for past injuries, and full security against future depredations, which security was made to consist in an explicit renunciation of the right of *searching* ships, in all places except the Spanish ports and seas.

Walpole, well aware of the inflexibility of the Spanish court on this delicate question, had contrived to word the resolutions, which passed the commons, in such a manner as to omit the mention of the word *Search*. He had avoided, with great prudence, all specific claims, and confined the expressions of the house to general topics. But this design had been frustrated by the resolutions of the lords, which reduced the question to a specific proposition, and positively declared the illegality of *searching* English vessels on the open seas, and trading to and from the different parts of the British dominions. These discordant resolutions naturally produced numerous embarrassments, and would have occasioned insuperable obstructions, had not the minister resolved to adhere to the decision of the commons.

But the negotiation encountered the greatest difficulty from the disputes of the crown of Spain with the South Sea company. The origin and progress of that company, and the fatal consequences of the project of commerce to South America, have been already related *.

Before the assiento treaty, a very advantageous, though contraband trade, was carried on from Jamaica to the Spanish colonies. The Spanish governors connived at the introduction of negroes, and the importation of English manufactures. The profit of this traffic was certain and expeditious, and was still greater, because it was not attended with the payment of any duties to the king of Spain, or other incumbrances.

But this branch of traffic was evidently diminished by the assiento treaty. It then became the interest of Spain, for the sake of the duties, as well as of the South Sea company, who wished to monopolize the trade to the Spanish West Indies, to stop this commercial intercourse, and many remonstrances were made for that purpose to government, as well as to the Spanish court, by the directors, who considered all British subjects, trading to the Spanish settlements, as interlopers upon their province. Hence disputes frequently arose between the South Sea company, and the traders of Jamaica; and the direc-

tors, by their remonstrances, often occasioned the seizure and confiscation of vessels which were taken in the act of carrying on an illicit trade, or with illicit goods on board. The court of Spain had made a merit with the British government, of having endeavoured to check a commerce which was prejudicial to so great a public company*, and at the same time the British traders made the most violent complaints against the guarda costas, for making these seizures, which they termed illegal and unjust.

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The assiento treaty stipulated the payment of certain duties, for the introduction of negroes, and other articles of trade. These had been always paid to the Spanish officers, according to the rate of exchange between Great Britain and Spain, and received without complaint. But as Spain had, several years before this period, given currency to another species of dollars, a claim was now made of the difference between the two species of dollars, ever since the new regulation, under the denomination of arrears. In addition to this, another demand was made, for the fourth of the profits acquired by the annual ship, which was due to the king of Spain. On the other side, the company claimed reparation for the damages sustained by the seizure of their effects in 1718 and 1727, before war had been declared between England and Spain.

In the midst of these difficulties, the minister exerted all his influence, at home and abroad, to settle the differences in a satisfactory manner, or to refer the settlement to the decision of plenipotentiaries, by which means farther time would be obtained to prevent the commencement of hostilities. A double negotiation was opened, between the ministers and Geraldino in London, and between Keene and La Quadra at Madrid, which had no immediate communication with each other. Walpole wholly influenced the negotiation at London, but he could only modify that which was carrying on at Madrid.

Geraldino having delivered a message, importing that his master was inclined to enter into measures for conciliating past differences, and agreeing upon a method for preventing them in future; an account was stated of the demands on each side, which, after some difficulties, was reduced to a balance of £. 140,000, in favour of England, and sent to Mr. Keene to be ratified. But when this agreement was transmitted, the court of Madrid refused to ratify it, declaring that Geraldino had surpassed his powers.

Foiled in this attempt, the minister modified and tempered the violent orders sent from the duke of Newcastle to Mr. Keene, and exhorted him to

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 417.

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use every effort with de la Quadra, and to represent the necessity of adjusting the differences amicably.

This pacific spirit fortunately prevailed in the counsels of England; and due consideration was paid to the honour, jealousy, and even to the prejudices of Spain. Keene seconded the pacific efforts of the minister with great address and ability, and finally overcame the dilatoriness, the punctilios, and the repugnance of the Spanish court.

Articles of
the conven-
tion.

A convention was accordingly settled on the following basis: "That within six weeks, two plenipotentiaries should meet at Madrid, to regulate the respective pretensions of the two crowns, with relation to the trade and navigation in America and Europe, and to the limits of Florida and Carolina, as well as the other points which remained to be adjusted, according to former treaties. That the plenipotentiaries should finish their conferences within eight months: That in the mean time, no progress should be made in the fortifications of Florida and Carolina. That his Catholic majesty should, within four months from the day of exchanging the ratifications, pay to the king of Great Britain, the sum of ninety-five thousand pounds, as a balance due to Great Britain, after deduction made of the demands of Spain. That this sum should be employed for the satisfaction, discharge, and payment of the claims of British subjects upon the crown of Spain. That this reciprocal discharge, however, should not extend or relate to the accounts and differences which subsisted between the crown of Spain and the assiento company, nor to any private contracts between either of the two crowns, or their ministers, with the subjects of the other; or between the subjects of each nation respectively."

Protest of
Spain.

In all his conferences with Mr. Keene, de la Quadra had insisted, that £.68,000 was due to his master from the South Sea company; and had declared that the convention would not be ratified, unless that money was paid. Keene represented, that the interests of the company, and those of England, were distinct considerations; and that the convention was a settlement of accounts between the two nations, the other, a private transaction between the king of Spain and the company. He said, that if it was proved that £.68,000 was owing, the money should be paid. This la Quadra considered as a positive promise, that the £.68,000 should be liquidated before the execution of the articles of the convention. Accordingly, at the very moment when the convention was to be ratified, the Spanish minister delivered to Keene, a declaration or protest, declaring, in due form, that the king of Spain reserved to himself the right of suspending the assiento treaty, should the company not pay within a short time the £.68,000. Under the validity and force

force of this protest, and that, upon the firm supposition that it would not be eluded on any motive or pretext, he was ready to sign the convention. Keene seeing the obstinacy of the Spanish court, knowing the anxiety of the British minister, to receive the ratification before the meeting of parliament, and aware, that unless he accepted the protest, the negotiation would be instantly broken off, consented to receive it, though without admitting the fact it assumed, and simply to be transmitted to the consideration of the British cabinet. Clogged with this obstruction, the convention was finally signed at Madrid, and transmitted by a courier to London, who did not arrive till the 15th of January.

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The public mind was agitated to a degree of frenzy, and their expectations to a pitch which no reasonable concession could gratify. Besides punishment inflicted on the Spanish captains, and others who had committed depredations, they required, that the Spaniards should positively disclaim all right to search British ships in the American seas, and disavow their right to Georgia, and a part of South Carolina; that they should pay £.340,000 as a compensation for the captures and confiscations, to discharge the balance of the account, due to the South Sea company, for the effects confiscated, which amounted to no less a sum than a million sterling; and it was said, that if the nation should not receive satisfaction on these particulars, no justice was procured, and no security obtained. In the midst of these clamours, every eye was directed to the meeting of parliament, which was to assemble on the 18th of January. But the public were disappointed: on that day the parliament was farther prorogued until the first of February, and it was known that the difficulty in adjusting the disputes with Spain, had been the cause of this prorogation.

Agitation of
the public.

On the first of February the parliament assembled. The speech from the throne mentioned the ratification of the convention.

Meeting of
parliament.

"It is now a great satisfaction to me, that I am able to acquaint you, that the measures I have pursued have had so good an effect, that a convention is concluded and signed between me and the king of Spain, whereby, upon consideration had of the demands on both sides, that prince has obliged himself to make reparation to my subjects for their losses, by a certain stipulated payment: and plenipotentiaries are therein named and appointed for regulating, within a limited time, all the grievances and abuses which have hitherto interrupted our commerce and navigation in the American seas; and for settling all matters and disputes, in such a manner, as may for the future prevent and remove all new causes and pretences of complaint, by a strict observance of our mutual treaties, and a just regard to the

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speech.

rights

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rights and privileges belonging to each other. I will order the convention, and the separate articles, to be laid before you.

"It hath been my principal care to make use of the confidence you reposed in me, in this critical and doubtful conjuncture, with no other view, but the general and lasting benefit of my kingdoms; and if all the ends which are to be hoped for, even from successful arms, can be attained, without plunging the nation into a war, it must be thought, by all reasonable and unprejudiced persons, the most desirable event*."

Proceedings.

The motion for an address encountered violent opposition in both houses. In the lords, however, it passed without a division, by the interposition of the earl of Scarborough and the duke of Argyle, who, though they declared their disapprobation of that thing called a convention, yet conceived it would be irregular to mention it till it was laid before them, and thought that unanimity was highly necessary at the present juncture.

In the commons, an address being moved for as usual, in the terms of the speech, Sir William Wyndham objected to all expressions which might appear an approbation of the convention, and therefore proposed omitting all the paragraph which alluded to it, and merely to thank the king for his speech, and to assure him that the house would grant the necessary supplies, and endeavour to avoid all heats and animosities.

Sir Robert Walpole, in a long and able speech, defended the conduct of ministers in the negotiation with Spain. He declared that the accommodation was attended with all the advantages which the most successful warfare could have procured. He shewed, under the existing circumstances, it was more prudent and beneficial to avoid extremities; that all the commercial nations, even France itself, did not object to the claim of searching and seizing their ships, when taken in the act of carrying on illegal trade. He then extolled the convention, with a wantonness of praise not usual with him, and declared he thought it his peculiar happiness, that the nation would deem the influence he possessed, the principal means of its ratification; and that he should not be sorry if it was considered as a measure entirely his own. He finally observed, that it was unfair to decide on the merits or demerits of the convention, before it was known; that in a few days it would be submitted to the house, when a candid discussion would take place; and that as there was no reason to suppose it contrary to the known interest of the nation, he saw no ground for opposing the address. He reminded the house, that the last session he declared him-

* Journals.

self answerable for the measures pursued by government, while he was minister; he was prepared to make good his promise; all he desired was a candid hearing, and that he hoped would not be denied. He concluded, by opposing the amendment, and supporting the original address.

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He was answered by Lyttleton, Sir John Hynde Cotton, and Sir John Barnard, who took notice that the speech itself was most absurdly worded, because it stated, that plenipotentiaries were to regulate the grievances and abuses that had happened to the British subjects, from the insolence and cruelty of the Spaniards: now to regulate abuses, he said, implied a continuance of them, but only under another form*.

The motion for the address was carried by 234 against 141 †; a majority which inspired the minister with unfounded hopes of a quiet and easy session, for on the contrary, every measure was adopted, and every expedient resorted to for the purpose of harassing administration, and throwing an odium on the measures of government.

Almost the only question which was not resisted, was the proposal for employing 12,000 seamen. The motion for 18,000 land forces was opposed, and a reduction to 12,000, as in the last session, moved by Shippen, but negatived by 253 against 183 ‡.

Feb. 14.

Mean while the convention had been laid before the house, and referred to a committee, and its contents having been communicated to the public, a general ferment prevailed in the nation, and a violent outcry was raised against the conditions. One article, agreed to by the English commissaries, which gave much umbrage, and had a great effect in irritating the public mind, was the claim of £.60,000, for the value of the ships taken by admiral Byng, off the coast of Sicily, in 1718. This demand was founded on an article in the peace of Madrid, made under the administration of Sunderland, which promised restitution, and was confirmed by the treaty of Seville. This stipulation had never been performed; the claim on the side of the Spaniards still existed in its full force, and therefore, though unpopular, was just and reasonable. Motions being made by the party in opposition, that the petitioners might be heard by counsel, were warmly opposed by the ministerial party, and negatived, after long and warm debates §. A private petition was also presented from the owners of a ship taken in 1727, and another upon the capture of the ship Sarah, belonging to Bristol, praying

Convention referred to a committee.

General dissatisfaction.

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 395.

† Journals. Chandler.

‡ Chandler.

§ 242 against 207, and 237 against 208. Journals.

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Feb. 26.

Feb. 5.
Convention
approved in
the lords.

Debated in
the com-
mons.

H. Walpole's
speech.

also to be heard by counsel. The minister justly observed, that if the proprietors of every capture were to be heard by counsel, the house would be solely occupied in such affairs, and could not attend to public business. The question, however, was pressed, and lost only by 13 *. This large minority, upon so disputed a point, inspired the opposition with the most sanguine hopes, and encouraged them to persevere.

After various other petitions, both public and private, the convention was first taken into consideration in the house of lords. On the 1st of March, lord Cholmondeley moved an address, similar to that which was afterwards proposed in the house of commons, by Horace Walpole. After a warm and vigorous contest, the address was voted by a majority of 95 against 74, and a strong protest was made by nine and thirty peers †. At the head of those who voted in opposition, was the prince of Wales.

Notwithstanding their defeat in the house of lords, the opposition entertained hopes, that the convention would be disapproved and rejected by the commons. At length, the 6th of March was the day appointed for taking into consideration, the various petitions relating to the convention. The members repaired so early to the house, that 100 had taken their seats before eight in the morning. The public attention was no less powerfully attracted to this important debate, the result of which was expected to decide the fate of the minister. The sixth and seventh were occupied in examining witnesses, and hearing some West India merchants, in support of their petitions.

On the 8th, at half past eleven, Horace Walpole, who had thoroughly understood the subject, and had drawn up several papers relative to the transaction, opened the debate by a speech of two hours and a half ‡. He began by expressing his hopes, that in discussing this important question, on which depended the issue of peace or war, gentlemen would lay aside wit and railing accusations, avoid personalities, not mistake a popular outcry, for the voice of the people, as distinguished from that of parliament, and would not be biased by strong assertions without proof. After making a general observation, that in all differences between two nations, an immediate declaration of war ought not to be the first resolution of either, he

* 175 to 162, Journals, Tindal, vol. 20, p. 200.

† Lords' Debates.

‡ Among the Orford Papers, are a few parliamentary memorandums, in the hand writing of Sir Robert Walpole, taken by him during

the first debate on the convention. They are minutes of part of Horace Walpole's speech, Sir Thomas Saunderson's, and Mr. Pitt's. Though short and imperfect, they sufficiently prove the general accuracy of the speeches, given by Chandler, on that occasion.

observed,

observed, that the three great points on which he should rest the defence of the convention were, first, honour; second, satisfaction; and third, security. He then undertook to prove, that the honour of the nation was preserved, that satisfaction had been given for past injuries, and security obtained against future grievances.

"As to the first position, which regards the honour of the nation; I observe," he said, "that gentlemen, in discussing our differences with Spain, are impressed with a notion, that the honour of the nation has been sacrificed. This is a topic on which some gentlemen have fondly expatiated. I am no less jealous of the national honour than any other gentleman; but true honour is founded on justice and humanity, and not on ambition, false glory, or interest, and I am convinced that this treaty is founded on the former, and not on the latter.

"The differences with Spain arose from disputes on matters of right, or from depredations committed by Spanish subjects. The matter of right being incontestible, and the depredations great and frequent, had interest, ambition, or false glory been the objects, the king had sufficient pretence to declare war without having recourse to amicable means. But as these were not his objects, he considered the peace and happiness of his people, as the solid foundation of his glory. He made repeated, but ineffectual applications to Spain, to adjust the differences in an amicable manner. At length, supported by the resolutions of both houses during the last sessions, he made a peremptory demand, and insisted, that unless a speedy and categorical answer was given, recourse must be had to those extremities which he so much wished to avoid. This declaration, and the preparations which accompanied it, had a due effect. The king of Spain agreed to enter upon an immediate discussion of the rights in dispute, and to make every just compensation. Hence the king, concluding that there was a probability of accommodating differences, could not, on the principles of justice and humanity, commence hostilities, or refuse to accept a preliminary convention, by which satisfaction was to be obtained for past, and security against future injuries.

"Honour may be satisfied by submission, as well as by vindictive justice; and public honour differs essentially from private honour. The honour of the nation can be injured but by some public or national act. When therefore any injury is done, or an affront given by the subjects of one state to those of another, the state, whose subjects have suffered injury, ought to apply to the other for satisfaction, and ought not to consider its honour as affected, till the state, whose subjects committed the insult, has made the act its own, by refusing to punish the transgressors, or to make reparation for damages.

Period VII. 1737 to 1742. damages. Let us apply this reasoning to the present subject. The Spanish depredations have been committed by private subjects; application has been made for reparation: The crown promises reparation.

"This method of agreeing to the convention, and suspending hostilities, until it could be seen what effect it would produce, is not only consonant to honour and justice, but agreeable to the advice given by both houses of parliament. The addresses exhorted the king to use his endeavours to obtain effectual relief for his injured subjects, and promised, if his instances should prove ineffectual, to support him in taking such measures, as honour and justice required. It appears, from the articles of this convention, that the king has obtained such satisfaction and such security as could reasonably be expected.

"With regard to satisfaction for past injuries, the mode of reparation is not only finally adjusted, but the payment of a specific sum is actually promised within a very short time after the exchange of the ratifications. There being mutual demands for damages sustained, it seemed necessary to settle and balance the account: It then appeared, that our demands upon Spain

amounted to	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£. 200,000
Those of Spain upon us to	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£. 60,000
Which made a balance of	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£. 140,000

This the king of Spain proposed to pay by assignments upon his revenues in America. But as we knew the tediousness and precariousness of that fund, it was proposed to make an allowance for prompt payment, on the condition of paying the money in a short time at London; the allowance agreed on was £. 45,000, which reduced the sum due us to £. 95,000, and this sum his Catholic majesty has expressly promised, by this convention, to pay at London, in four months after the exchange of the ratifications. From hence it appears, that we have not only got all the reparation any reasonable man could expect, but all the reparation we could insist on, with any pretence of justice.

"The next great object under consideration is our future security. Now it is plain, that security depends on those matters of right which are now in dispute, and therefore cannot be effectually provided for, until those rights are fully ascertained. But as this is a discussion which depends not only on several disputable points in the law of nations, but also on the nature and tenour of various treaties, and on many facts and local circumstances, which can only be ascertained in the West Indies, it was impossible to settle the business in a few weeks, or by a preliminary convention. For this reason, this discussion is referred to plenipotentiaries, who are to meet within

fix

six weeks after the exchange of the ratifications, and must finally settle the points referred to them within the short term of eight months, which is all that we could expect, and as much as we could, with justice or reason, desire.

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“On this account the treaty must be considered as a good preliminary, and such as ought to have been accepted in preference to a war, even had there not been one word in the treaty, which could tend to a presumption that Spain had relinquished any of the rights which were the objects of dispute. But this is not the case. The principal right exercised by Spain, is that of searching British ships in the open seas, and seizing them, if Spanish money or merchandize are found on board. But this right Spain has renounced in the present preliminary, if not by the letter, at least by the spirit of the treaty. This right is not *claimed* by Spain, but *exercised* only. How then could it be remedied but by consent, either by a reparation, or by an explanatory treaty. The reparation is actually made, and the treaty is to follow, which is to prevent future aggressions.

“The preamble of the convention recites all the grievances complained of, and specifies *visiting, searching, and taking of vessels, and seizing effects*. It acknowledges them to be of such a nature, *that without future care, they might occasion an open rupture between the two crowns*. Here then Spain avows, that the searching of ships is a cause of complaint, and she allows it to be a grievance which ought to be remedied. But can the exercise of a *just right* be deemed a cause of complaint? Can it be allowed to be a grievance? And is it not a reasonable conclusion that Spain, having by the preamble disclaimed her right, indicates a resolution to disclaim it also in the definitive treaty.

“But the court of Madrid has not only acknowledged the searching of ships on the open seas, and confiscating them for having Spanish money and effects on board, to be a grievance which ought to be remedied, but they have in some measure owned it to be wrong. They have allowed it to be an injury, by giving a reparation for all such captures as are proved to have been illegal. Therefore the plenipotentiaries are not to settle the right, not to determine whether it be a grievance or not, for that is allowed; they are to settle, by a definitive treaty, the means to prevent new abuses, and remove the causes of future complaints. But in this their powers are circumscribed. For the regulations which they are to accede to, must be conformable to the existing treaties. This must be settled within a limited time, and must be ratified by the king; so that should the plenipotentiaries adjust the business in such a manner

Period VII. 1737 to 1742. manner as not to satisfy the country, they may still be not ratified, and we may then have the choice of war or peace.

"The chief question; therefore, now seems to be, whether we ought to go to war, rather than grant a delay of eight months, for giving full satisfaction and absolute security; and I do not think that any man who considers the present situation of Europe, or the present circumstances of this nation, would be for involving the country in a dangerous and expensive war, rather than grant such a delay.

"In considering this question, I trust that gentlemen will not pretend to decide from general declamations on peace and war, but reflect that the true state of the question rests on the specific circumstances of the present moment, and the dangers of war, as it concerns the present times, conditions, and trade. War, in all situations, even with the fairest prospect of success, is always dangerous and destructive to a trading nation; it is much more dangerous when the event is doubtful.

"It follows from these premises, that if the situation of Europe was favourable to us, and if our circumstances were also advantageous, we ought not wantonly to engage in war. How much more ought this evil to be avoided, when the state of Europe wears a most unfavourable aspect, and our internal situation is unpromising.

"France is powerful, and governed by wise counsels, tranquil at home, and respected abroad. Their sovereign is bound by interest, as well as by the ties of blood, to assist the king of Spain, if he is attacked, and in all probability, a treaty of alliance is now forming, and perhaps concluded, between the two crowns. If we declare war against Spain, we must therefore expect that France will take part with Spain against us; and though I have so good an opinion of my country, as to think we are more than a match for the one, and at least an equal match for the other, yet I cannot be so vain as to imagine we are an equal match for both; and consequently, I must think we have reason to be afraid of sinking under the burthen, unless we can obtain assistance from some of the other great powers."

He then took a view of the state of Europe, which he described as so situated, that England was without a single ally, who was either willing or capable of affording assistance. The Emperor involved in the misfortunes of the Turkish war, and under the direction of France; the Dutch weak, wavering, and loaded with debts; Sweden wholly governed by France; Denmark and Russia at too great a distance, even if inclined, to act in our favour; the king of Naples disposed to take part with the other branches of the house of Bourbon,

Bourbon, and the king of Sardinia incapable of coming forward singly to our assistance.

"This being the state of Europe," he continued, "would it not be the height of folly and madness to engage in hostilities, if we can with honour and security avoid or delay them?"

"Our domestic situation is no less unfavourable: we are loaded with burthens which are almost too heavy to bear; the public revenue is scarcely sufficient to supply the expences of our civil establishment in time of peace: if we enter into war, new taxes must be imposed; the animosities and divisions which prevail too much amongst us will be increased; that party which has been hitherto suppressed by our vigour and unanimity, will again rear its head; our enemies will avail themselves of the war, to favour the cause of the Pretender, and as new burthens are unavoidably laid on the public, these misfortunes will be ascribed to the illustrious family on the throne. France and Spain may pour in their troops upon our coasts, which our fleet cannot always prevent; we shall be thrown into confusion at home, and have neither leisure or power to distress our enemies, or protect our colonies.

"I feel as much as others for the sufferings of our merchants, for the indignities which have been inflicted on the nation, by the Spanish guarda costas; but national resolutions ought not to be directed by passion. We ought to shew proper resentment, but our resentment ought to be governed by prudence, and if it is, we shall suspend it, until Europe presents a more favourable aspect. I am therefore of opinion, that if the convention had been less favourable, it ought, in the present juncture, to have been accepted. But I trust I have shewn that we have acquired as much as we could expect from a preliminary treaty, and have every reason to hope, that in the space of eight months we shall obtain, by a definitive treaty, all we can desire."

He then moved an address, "to return thanks for the communication of the convention; for bringing the demands of his subjects to a final determination, and for procuring a speedy payment for the losses sustained by the merchants; declaring their satisfaction in the foundation laid for preventing and removing similar abuses in future, and for preserving peace; to express a reliance on the king, that effectual care would be taken for securing and establishing the freedom of navigation in the American seas; that the British subjects may enjoy, unmolested, their undoubted right of navigating and trading to and from any part of his majesty's dominions, without being liable to be stopped, visited, or searched in the open seas, or being subject to any other violation of the treaties subsisting; and that in settling the limits of

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of his dominions in America, the greatest regard would be had to the rights and possessions belonging to the crown and subject; and to assure the king, that in case his just expectations should not be answered, the house would support him in taking such measures, as might be most conducive to vindicate the honour and dignity of his crown, and the rights of his people."

The address was calculated to obviate the strong objections which were made to the convention, arising from its not being a definitive treaty, not sufficiently explicit, and leaving the point to be decided by future discussion.

The opposition strenuously supported the objections, and in reply to the arguments of Horace Walpole, expatiated on the injured honour of the nation, and the pusillanimity of the minister. They deplored the British trade ruined, the British sailors imprisoned and tortured, and the British flag insulted. They exhausted every topic which was calculated to inflame the public mind, and appealed forcibly to the passions and feelings.

Of Sir T.
Saunderson.

The story of Jenkins's ears was not omitted. "Even the Spanish pirate," exclaimed Sir Thomas Saunderson, who spoke first in reply to Horace Walpole, "who cut off captain Jenkins's ear, making use at the same time of the most insulting expression towards the person of our king, an expression which no British subject can decently repeat, an expression which no man that has a regard for his sovereign can ever forgive: Even this fellow, I say, is suffered to live to enjoy the fruits of his rapine, and remain a living testimony of the cowardly tameness and mean submission of Great Britain, and of the triumphant pride and stubborn haughtiness of Spain *."

Of lord Gage.

In contradiction to the statement of Horace Walpole, lord Gage observed, "The losses sustained by the Spanish depredations, amounted to three hundred and forty thousand pounds. The commissary, by a stroke of his pen, reduced this demand to two hundred thousand pounds; then forty-five thousand were struck off for prompt payment. He then allotted sixty thousand pounds as the remaining part of a debt pretended to be due to Spain, for the destruction of her fleet by Sir George Byng, though it appeared, by the instructions on the table, that Spain had been already amply satisfied on that head. These deductions reduced the balance to ninety-five thousand pounds; but the king of Spain insisted upon the South Sea company's paying immediately the sum of sixty-eight thousand pounds, as a debt due to him on one head of accounts, though, in other articles, his

* Chandler, vol. 11, p. 15.

Catholic majesty was indebted to the company a million over and above this demand. The remainder to be paid by Spain, did not exceed seven and twenty thousand pounds, from which she insisted upon deducting whatever she might have given in satisfaction for any of the British ships that had been taken; and on being allowed the value of the *St. Theresa*, a Spanish ship which had been seized in the port of Dublin *."

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Pitt, who spoke most ably on this occasion, objected to the question, as of too complicated † a nature to be submitted at once to the approbation of the committee. "The address, he said, was proposed for no other end than to extort an approbation of the convention. He observed, that the house was proceeding upon an artificial ministerial question, covering and taking sanctuary in the royal name, instead of meeting openly, and standing fairly, the direct judgment and sentence of parliament upon the several articles. "Is this," he exclaimed, "any longer a nation? or where is an English parliament, if with more ships in our harbours than in all the navies of Europe, with more than two millions of people in the American colonies, we will bear to hear of the expediency of receiving from Spain, an insecure, unsatisfactory, dishonourable convention, which carries downright subjection in every line."

Of Pitt.

He said, that the great national objection, the searching of ships, stood in the preamble of the convention, as the reproach of the whole, as the strongest evidence of the fatal submission which followed. On the part of Spain, an usurpation, an inhuman tyranny, claimed and exercised over the American seas; on the part of England, an undoubted right by treaties, and from God and nature, declared and asserted in the resolution of parliament, was now referred to the discussion of plenipotentiaries, on one and the same equal foot. This undoubted right was to be discussed and regulated, and if to regulate, be to prescribe rules (as in all construction it is) this right is, by the express words of the convention, to be given up and sacrificed; for it must cease to be any thing from the moment it is submitted to limits. He concluded in the most energetic language, "This convention, Sir, I think, from my soul, is nothing but a stipulation for national ignominy; an illusory expedient to baffle the resentment of the nation; a truce without a suspension of hostilities on the part of Spain; on the part of England, a suspension. As to Georgia, of the first law of nature, self-preservation and self-defence; a surrender of the rights and trade

* Smollett, vol. 3. p. 20. Chandler.

† Memorandums of Sir Robert Walpole.

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of England to the mercy of plenipotentiaries, and in this infinitely highest and sacred point, future security, not only inadequate, but directly repugnant to the resolutions of parliament, and the gracious promise of the throne. The complaints of your despairing merchants, the voice of England has condemned it; be the guilt of it upon the head of the adviser; God forbid that this committee should share the guilt by approving it *."

Of Lyttleton.

It was observed by Lyttleton, "The grievances of England admit but of one remedy, a very short and simple one; that our ships shall not be searched on any pretence. This alone can go to the root of our grievances, all less than this is trifling, hurtful, and fatal to commerce.

"Had we proceeded conformably to the intentions of parliament, we should either have acted with vigour, or have obtained a real security, in an express acknowledgment of our right not to be searched, as a preliminary *sine qua non* to our treating at all. This we ought to have insisted on in the words of La Quadra's protest (which is the preliminary *sine qua non* of that crown) we ought to have insisted on in those very words, "as the precise and essential means to overcome the so much debated disputes, and that on the validity and force of this express acknowledgment, the signing the convention may be proceeded on, and in no other manner." Instead of this, what have we done? We have referred it to plenipotentiaries. Is not this weakening our right? Would you, Sir, submit to a reference, whether you may travel unmolested from your house in town to your house in the country? Your right is clear and undeniable, why would you have it discussed? But much less would you refer it, if two of your judges belonged to a gang, which has often stopped and robbed you in your way thither before.

"But what is this wretched reprieve that we have begged for eight months? Will that do us any good? Will that be worth our acceptance? Do we really flatter ourselves that we are now at peace? Peace is a secure and unmolested enjoyment of our rights. But peace, at the expence of rights, of essential rights, peace exposed to insults, peace exposed to injuries, is the most abject, is the most deplorable, is the most calamitous circumstance of human affairs. It is the worst effect that could be produced by the most ruinous war. With scorn let us reject it, that to all we have suffered before, to all the accumulated insults ever heaped upon a nation, a worse dishonour may not be added, and that dishonour fall upon the parliament. And therefore I give my most hearty negative to this question †."

Of Walpole.

The minister spoke last in this important debate. His principal efforts

* Chandler.

† Ibid.

were directed to remove the objection of its not being a definitive treaty. He readily allowed that it was not, but contended that it laid the foundation for one. He again adverted to the share which he had in laying this foundation, and declared it to be his greatest boast at present, and would be his greatest honour in succeeding times, to be mentioned as the minister who had endeavoured by this convention to prevent the necessity of making war upon a nation with whom it was our greatest interest to be at peace, at a time when the doubtful situation of Europe left us little hopes of assistance, and gave well-founded apprehensions of being attacked by other powers. He declared that a war with Spain, after the concessions already made, was unjust, impolitic, and dishonourable; that England being a trading nation, the prosperity of that trade ought to be the principal object in view. "Admitting, however," he said, "that the convention has not effectually answered the expectations of the house, should it not be considered whether the declaration of war would benefit trade, what prospect of success could be reasonably entertained, and particularly whether even a successful war with Spain, might not involve us in a very doubtful and expensive war with other powers? These considerations seem never once to have occupied the thoughts of those who are adverse to the question. It is laid down as a maxim, that we ought immediately to enter into a war, and yet nothing is allowed for the uncertainty of the event, for the interruption of commerce, and the prodigious expence with which it would be attended. But should we even lay aside these considerations, are we to have no regard to common justice, to those treaties, the observance of which has been so justly contended for? These treaties prohibit all trade with the Spanish West Indies, excepting that carried on by the annual assiento ship. In contradiction then to these express stipulations, are our ships never to be searched, and is the trade to the Spanish West Indies open to every interloper? For what difference is there between throwing that trade open, and having a liberty not only of approaching their coasts, but even of hovering on them as long as we please, without being stopped or searched? These are the unjust concessions which the advocates of a war require. The convention, on the contrary, stipulates that the treaties subsisting between the two crowns, should be the rule for settling disputes relating to trade. We are, therefore, in no danger of suffering from the convention, because it is admitted that all we ought in reason to claim, is the observance of those treaties." He hoped, therefore, that the address would pass.

The address was carried by a majority of only 28; 260 against 232*.

* Chandler.

4 H 2

Chapter 52.

1738 to 1739.

Address carried.

On

Period VII.

1737 to 1742.

March 9.
Motion for
re-commit-
ment.

On the ensuing day, the report of the resolution in the committee to address the king, being read, the re-commitment was warmly urged. Pulteney, who had reserved himself for this day, opened the debate, and was seconded by Sir William Wyndham. Their speeches were full of declamation and invective, and contained no new arguments. The minister replied in a long and elaborate speech, in which he defended the convention, and explained the treaties of 1667 and 1670. He shewed that the demand of not searching British ships was a new demand, and therefore it could not be expected that Spain should renounce a right which they had hitherto exercised, without due examination. He observed, that the business was of so intricate, as well as delicate a nature, that it could not be settled at once, and in a moment, and therefore in reason, justice, and prudence, was properly left to the discussion of the plenipotentiaries. After a few other speeches of little consequence, the motion for a re-commitment was negatived by 244 against 214*.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-THIRD:

1739.

Secession of the Minority.—Consequences.—Beneficial Acts of Parliament.—Danish Subsidy.—Opposition and Anecdotes of John Duke of Argyle.—Vote of Credit.—Termination of the Spanish Negotiation.—Declaration of War.—Conduct of England:—And of Sir Robert Walpole.—Divisions in the Cabinet.

Secession of
the minority.

THE last effort to prevent the address on the convention having proved ineffectual, great part of the minority carried into execution, a design which they had previously concerted. It was no less than to absent themselves, or, as it was called, to *secede* from parliament.

Speech of
Sir William
Wyndham.

Accordingly, Sir William Wyndham, to whose advice, at the instigation of Bolingbroke, this measure has been usually attributed, said, "I have seen,

* Journals.

with

with the utmost concern, this shameful, this fatal measure, approved of by a majority of but 28, and I now rise to pay my last duty to my country, as a member of this house.

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1739.

"I was in hopes that the many unanswerable arguments urged in the debate against the convention, might have prevailed upon gentlemen to have for once listened to the dictates of reason; for once to have distinguished themselves from being a faction against the liberties and properties of their fellow subjects. I was the more in hopes of this, since in all the companies I have been in from the time this convention has been spoken of, I have not found one single person without doors pretend to justify it. Is it not strange, that the eloquence of one man should have so great an effect within these walls, and the unanimous voice of a brave suffering people without, should have so little? I am surprised that I should be so blind as not to discern one argument that has the least appearance of reason, among all that has been offered, for our agreeing to this address. This must proceed either from the majority of this house being determined by arguments that we have not heard, or from my wanting common sense to comprehend the force of those we have heard. In the first case, I think I cannot, with honour, sit in an assembly which is determined by motives which I am not at liberty to mention; and if the last is the case, I look upon myself as a very unfit person to serve as a senator. I here, Sir, bid a final adieu to this house. Perhaps when another parliament shall succeed, I may be again at liberty to serve my country in the same capacity. I therefore appeal, Sir, to a future, free, uninfluenced house of commons. Let it be the judge of my conduct, and that of my friends, on this occasion. Mean time, I shall conclude with doing that duty to my country I am still at liberty to perform, which is to pray for its preservation:

"May, therefore, that Power which has so often, and so visibly interposed in behalf of the rights and liberties of this nation, continue its care over us at this worst and most dangerous juncture, whilst the insolence of enemies without, and the influence of corruption within, threaten the ruin of her constitution."

The animated tone of voice, and impassioned gesture which accompanied this effusion, were as dignified and striking, as the expressions were petulant and offensive. The insult offered to the house in calling the majority a faction, raised the indignation of Pelham, and he was in the act of rising to move for commitment to the Tower, when the minister, conscious that such a measure would create a dangerous ferment in the country, prevented him

Period VII. him by rising himself, and with an animation and spirit equal to that which
 1737 to 1742. had distinguished Sir William Wyndham, said,

Walpole's
 reply.

"Sir, the measures which the gentleman who spoke last, and his friends may pursue, give me no uneasiness. The friends of the nation, and the house, are obliged to them for pulling off the mask, by making this public declaration. We can be upon our guard against open rebellion, but 'tis difficult to guard against secret traitors. The faction I speak of, never sat in this house, they never joined in any public measure of the government, but with a view to distress it, and serve a popish interest. The gentleman who is now the mouth of this faction, was looked upon as the head of those traitors, who, twenty-five years ago, conspired the destruction of their country, and of the royal family, to set a popish pretender upon the throne. He was seized by the vigilance of government, and pardoned by its clemency; but all the use he ungratefully made of that clemency, has been to qualify himself according to *law*, that he and his party may, some time or other, have an opportunity to overthrow all *law*.

"I am only afraid that they will not be so good as their word, and that they will return; for I remember that, in the case of their favourite prelate*, who was impeached of treason, the same gentleman and his faction made the same resolution. They then went off like traitors as they were; but their retreat had not the detestable effect they expected and wished, and therefore they returned. Ever since, Sir, they have persevered in the same treasonable intention of serving that interest, by distressing the government. But I hope their behaviour will unite all true friends of the present happy establishment of the crown in his majesty's person and family more firmly than ever; and that the gentlemen who, with good intentions, have been deluded into the like measures, will awaken from their delusion, since the trumpet of rebellion is now audaciously sounded †."

The consequence of this measure was, to the seceders disappointment, and speedy repentance, to the minister satisfaction and triumph. In fact, they had scarcely declared their resolution, before they saw and appreciated the impropriety and ill policy of the measure. They even flattered themselves with the hopes of being called back to their posts. Several of the minority, among whom were Sir John Barnard and lord Cornbury, refused to desert their parliamentary stations; and the applause which they received from their constituents, as well as from all moderate persons, was a tacit reflection on the conduct of the others. In fact, the seceders seemed not un-

* Atterbury.

† Gentleman's Magazine 1739.

willing to retrieve their error as soon they had committed it, by availing themselves of the call of the house, which stood for the ensuing Monday, and to have come down in a body for the purpose of enforcing some violent motion *. But the minister suspecting this design, prevented the execution of it, by obtaining an adjournment of the house till Tuesday †. They now experienced the ill policy of their conduct : The nation was not inflamed by their absence. It required no great depth of understanding to comprehend these simple questions : If it be admitted that the constitution was in danger, why did they quit their station ? If the majority of the commons was a faction, influenced or corrupted by the minister, why did they make that faction stronger by retiring from the house, and leaving the minister in possession of means to extend his corruption with greater facility ?

It was a great cause of satisfaction and triumph to the minister, who declared that no event during his whole administration, had ever relieved him from more embarrassments, or supplied him with greater means of serving the real interests of this country. He observed, that while he was continually baited by opposition, he could not introduce a single bill, of the most beneficial tendency, which would not meet with resistance, or expose him to obloquy. But as the principal leaders of the minority had retired from parliament, he had an opportunity to propose several, which tended to promote the commerce and manufactures of the country.

In conformity with this plan, he encouraged and invited every scheme which seemed calculated for the advantage of the internal and colonial trade. The manufactures of cloth were increased by the bill, which laid additional duties on the exportation of wool, and facilitated its importation from Ireland. The trade of the British colonies in the West Indies, was highly improved by an act permitting the introduction of sugar into foreign parts in English bottoms, without first landing them in Great Britain, and by rendering more effectual the duties on foreign sugar and molasses.

A bill also, of considerable public advantage, passed this session, for enlarging the powers of the commissioners of Westminster Bridge, and for enabling them to execute the whole structure in stone instead of wood ‡.

During the secession, the minister was embarrassed with a motion for the repeal of the test act. The dissenters took this opportunity to renew their

Attempt to
repeal the test
act.

* John Selwyn to Thomas Townshend.
Sidney Papers.

† Journals.
‡ Journals. Chandler.

Period VII. 1737 to 1742. petition, from a persuasion, that the absence of the Tories would deliver them from so many certain opponents. The Tories themselves, when appealed to by the minister's friends, expressed a malignant satisfaction at his distress. They wished to see in what manner he would conduct himself in so delicate a situation, and seemed not unwilling that it should pass the house of commons, conscious that it would be thrown out by the lords.

The hopes of the dissenters, and the malice of the Tories, were equally baffled by the event. Many of the Whigs, who usually gave their votes in favour of the repeal, yet detested the principles on which the Tories acted, and considering the motion as improperly introduced, with a view to perplex government, voted against the motion, and, notwithstanding the absence of the Tories, it was negatived by a larger majority than had ever appeared on that occasion, 188 against 89*.

It was probably at this period, that the minister, vexed at the dissenters, and conscious that he should, by submitting to the repeal, incur the displeasure of the numerous friends to the established church who supported his measures, by his imprudent frankness disoblige the whole body. A deputation of dissenters waited upon him, and Dr. Chandler, their principal, requested him to take into consideration, his repeated assurances of good will to their cause, and hoped that he would assist in obtaining the repeal of the test act. He made them the usual answer, that whatever were his private inclinations, the attempt was improper, and the time was not yet arrived. "You have so repeatedly returned this answer," replied, Dr. Chandler, "That I trust you will give me leave to ask you when the time will come?" "If you require a specific answer," said the minister, "I will give it you in a word—Never†."

Danish subsidy.

Fortunately for the minister, the absence of the seceding members delivered him from much of that embarrassment which he must have experienced had they remained in the house during the discussion of the Danish subsidy, which was, nevertheless, a subject of considerable obloquy and misrepresentation. The king, as elector of Hanover, had purchased the castle and lordship of Steinhorst from the duke of Holstein; but the title being disputed by a subject of Denmark, the king of Denmark ordered a corps of troops to garrison the castle. When a detachment of Hanoverians arrived to take possession, a skirmish ensued, and the Danes were driven from the place. This event inflamed the resentment of the king of Denmark, who made

* Mr. Selwyn to the Hon. T. Townshend. Correspondence. cated by a person who had it from Dr. Chandler.

† From authentic information, communi-

preparations

preparations as if he intended to revenge the insult, but the affair was soon after compromised: A treaty was concluded with the king of Denmark, who agreed to hold in readiness 6,000 troops for the service of England, on receiving an annual subsidy of 250,000 rix dollars, and 150,000 more when they should be taken into British pay*. As this treaty was concluded soon after the dispute concerning Steinhorst, and as the castle and lordship were at the same time ceded by Denmark to Hanover, the opposition naturally coupled these two events together, and when the treaty was announced to the house of commons, suggested that the compromise had been made at the expence of this country, that Steinhorst was acquired by British money: their statement has been adopted as true, and consigned to the pages of history†. This aspersions, however, is contradicted by the secret history of this treaty, which the minister at the time could not avow, and therefore only grounded his defence on the common topic of expediency.

May 5.

At the period now under consideration, a war between England and Spain was unavoidable; and France, foreseeing the probability of being drawn into hostilities, was secretly endeavouring to form alliances with several foreign powers, and to detach others from Great Britain. For this purpose she had secured Sweden, but failing in the attempt to gain Russia, turned her views to Denmark. The situation and circumstances of the sovereign, Christian the Sixth, gave hopes of success. He had involved himself in great expences from his love of building, and various projects, and was at this time encumbered with debts. Chavigni, the French minister at Copenhagen, offered the most advantageous terms if the king would engage in an alliance with France, and as the affair of Steinhorst had recently happened, endeavoured to inflame him against George the Second, and proposed a triple alliance with France and Sweden, by which Russia would be awed, England would have much difficulty in procuring naval stores from the Baltic, and the electorate of Hanover would be exposed to the united arms of the allied powers. To gain Christian, the French offered a subsidy of 400,000 rix dollars, for six, eight or ten years, required no troops, but promised a powerful succour to Denmark if attacked, and demanded no assistance in return if France was invaded. The king of Denmark frankly communicated these proposals to Titley, the English minister at Copenhagen‡; observed, that burthened as he was with debts, he required a subsidy; declared that he preferred the alliance of England, and that he would accept a smaller subsidy, and agree to less advantageous terms from England than were offered by France. The treaty

* Tindal, vol. 20 p. 414.

† Sinollett, vol. 3. p. 13. Belsham, vol. 1. p. 382.

‡ Extracts of Titley's Letters to lord Harrington. Walpole Papers.

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was accordingly arranged, and concluded; the insidious designs of France and Sweden were disconcerted, and the peace of the north secured.

If any proofs were wanting to shew that the opposition to the minister was in most cases merely personal, and that every measure, however innocent or indifferent, was supposed to be dictated by him, and promoted for some private view, an incident which passed in the house of lords will leave no doubt on the subject. When the bill for allowing the king to settle an annuity of £. 45,000 a year on his younger children, was brought from the commons to the lords, it was observed, in the course of the debate, that the children of the prince of Wales were not only unprovided but *unprayed* for. This observation alluded to the form of prayer for the royal family, issued by the privy council upon the marriage of the prince of Wales, when the name of the duke of Cumberland stood next to those of the prince and princess, and had not yet been altered. This suggestion was levelled against the minister, as if he had interfered for the purpose of insulting the prince. On this occasion the earl of Wilmington, who seldom spoke in any debate, broke his usual silence, informed the house, that he himself had counselled the king to order the form of prayer as it then stood, and declared that the minister was totally unacquainted with the arrangement. This frank and generous declaration had the desired effect. At the moment it was known that the minister had no concern in the business, the petulance of opposition ceased, and the bill passed without farther impediment*.

At this period the house of lords was no less the theatre of contention than the house of commons; and the number of speakers on the side of opposition great and formidable. The principal speakers on the side of government were, Newcastle, Hardwicke, Hervey, Cholmondeley, Ilay, and Devonshire. Those on the contrary side were, Carteret, Chesterfield, Bathurst, Westmoreland, Bedford, Sandwich, Halifax, Talbot, and Gower.

Opposition
and anecdotes
of John duke
of Argyle.

To this chosen band, was recently added John duke of Argyle and Greenwich, whose principles and motives will be best understood from an account of his previous life and conduct. He was born in 1678, and gave early indications of talents and capacity, which, however, were rather brilliant than solid, and he attained as great a proficiency in classical learning as a desultory application would permit. He discovered an early propensity to a military life, and being permitted to embrace the profession of arms, was promoted by king William to the command of a regiment of foot, before he had attained the age of nineteen.

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 417.

In 1703 he succeeded his father in his titles and estates, and to the consequence of first feudal lord in the Highlands of Scotland. He was appointed member of the privy council, captain of the Scotch horse guards, knight of the thistle, and one of the extraordinary lords of session. In 1705, he was nominated lord high commissioner to the parliament of Scotland; opened the parliament by a speech, and by his influence had a great share in promoting the union, though he declined being one of the commissioners. On his return to England, his services were so highly approved that he was created an English peer, by the title of baron of Chatham and earl of Greenwich. In 1706, 1708, and 1709, he made campaigns under the duke of Marlborough, and highly distinguished himself on various occasions, particularly at the battles of Ramilies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet, at the sieges of Ostend and Ghent, and at the assaults of Menin and Tournay. During these campaigns he gave instances of his high spirit and proneness to take offence, by an opposition to the duke of Marlborough, with whom he is said to have been at continued variance. His disgust was carried to so great a height, that in 1710, when it was moved in the house of peers that thanks should be given to the duke of Marlborough, the duke of Argyle made some petulant objections to the motion.

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1739.

His conduct endeared him to Harley and the Tories, who then paid great court to a nobleman of his high rank, parliamentary abilities, and military talents, and he was accordingly, in 1710, invested with the garter. He now quitted the Whigs, whom he had hitherto supported, spoke and voted with the Tories, and joined in the censure that was passed on the late administration.

In consequence of these exertions, he was appointed ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Charles the Third, king of Spain, and commander in chief of the British forces in that country. During his continuance in that high station, he performed no exploits of consequence, which he imputed to the ministry, who were employed in negotiating the peace of Utrecht. He loudly complained of their neglect, and was so much offended, that although on his return to England he was constituted commander in chief of all the land forces in Scotland, he soon became a violent opponent of Oxford's administration, and resisted the extension of the malt tax to Scotland. He supported the motion, made by the earl of Seafield, to dissolve the union, which he had so great share in forming, warily spoke in favour of the proposition, that the protestant succession was in danger, and bitterly censured the peace of Utrecht. In consequence of this opposition he was removed from all his employments.

Period VII. . On the illness of the queen, which terminated in her death, he repaired, with the duke of Somerset, to the council chamber, insisted that the physicians should be examined, and by his conduct on this occasion, rendered an essential service to the house of Hanover.

1737 to 1742.

On the accession of George the First, his services were not overlooked: He was appointed one of the lords justices till the arrival of the king, restored to his employment of commander in chief of the British forces in Scotland, was a member of the privy council, and made governor of Minorca, and colonel of the royal regiment of horse guards. He was, at this time, in high favour at court, was selected as one of the commissioners for establishing the household of the prince and princess of Wales, and made groom of the stole to the prince.

As commander in chief of the forces in Scotland, he was in 1715 sent to quell the rebellion, and partially defeated the rebels with a much superior force at the battle of Dumblain. His conduct, however, as well as his military operations on subsequent occasions, were exposed to much censure. Though he was a man of high spirit and undaunted courage, and always exposed his person more than became the general in chief, yet he was before the engagement irresolute and diffident of his talents. He did not know how to seize the decisive moment of action.

When he broke the enemy's left wing, he was hurried on by his ardour to pursue them too far, and on his return to the field of battle found that his own troops had suffered extremely, and that had the enemy taken advantage of their success, the king's army might have been entirely routed. In fact his conduct was rallied by the country people, who said that the general was a much better christian than a commander in chief, for he did not let his left hand know what his right hand did *.

He was accused of dilatory measures, and, in his turn, arraigned the ministry for neglect and inconsistency. The letters which passed between him and lord Townshend, are filled with complaints, apologies, and recriminations; and he returned from Scotland as much dissatisfied with the king and ministers as they were dissatisfied with him †.

His situation in the household of the prince of Wales, gave sufficient opportunity to ingratiate himself with the heir apparent. His graceful manners, his dignified demeanour, his splendid talents, his animated conversation, soon captivated the prince, and excited the jealousy of George the First. On

* Answer to the Speech of the Duke of Argyle, p. 38.

† Correspondence between Lord Town-

shend and the Duke of Argyle. Townshend Papers.

the misunderstanding in the royal family, he attached himself to the son, and was suspected by the king of fomenting the prince's discontent. On this account he was suddenly removed from the post of groom of the stole, and deprived of all his employments, to the great regret of the prince, who placed implicit confidence in him and his brother the earl of Ilay.

During the king's absence he was much consulted by the prince; and while he was accused by Walpole and Townshend of caballing with the Tories, one of the causes of disgust which the king entertained against those ministers was, that they privately caballed with the duke of Argyle and his brother*.

From the time of his removal he opposed administration with great acrimony, until he was softened by the place of lord steward of the household, which was conferred on him in 1719. From this period he uniformly supported the measures of government, although he was occasionally disgusted with the ministry.

In the debates which took place on the murder of captain Porteous, and on the bill of pains and penalties against the provost and city of Edinburgh, the duke of Argyle had strenuously resisted the bill, but in this instance he did not consider himself as opposing government, because several, and particularly his brother, the earl of Ilay, who uniformly supported the measures of administration, pursued the same conduct. In the course of these debates however, he threw out several peevish expressions, testifying his dislike to all kinds of jobs, which were supposed to be levelled against the minister, and seemed to indicate that he was dissatisfied. At the time of the rupture between the king and prince of Wales, his discontent became more manifest, and he finally entered the lists of opposition during the discussion of Spanish affairs.

It is still undecided whether his accession to the side of opposition was derived from the quick sight which he is said to have possessed *when* it was time to leave a minister, or from disgust and disappointment, or from disapprobation of measures. But whatever were the motives which influenced his conduct, his defection was a severe blow to the minister. He gave fresh spirits and energy to the cause of opposition in the house of lords. His violent and declamatory speeches were calculated to make a deep impression on the public mind, and his personal weight and interest in the house of commons seduced several members from the ministerial interest, amongst whom was Dodington, who had long attached himself to the duke, and looked up to him as a species of *demigod*.

* See Chapter 15.

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1737 to 1742.

The aversion which the anti-ministerial party had conceived against the duke of Argyle, was now converted into respect and love*. He who was bitterly arraigned for his political versatility, was now applauded for his virtue and patriotism. His opposition to the minister cancelled at once all his former errors, and he suddenly became the idol of the party. Pulteney paid a high eulogium to his great merit and exalted talents, while he was present in the house of commons, for the purpose of hearing the debate. Speaking of those who had voted against the convention, Pulteney observed, "They who had the courage, Sir, to follow the dictates of their own breasts (I do not mean to reflect on any gentleman) were disabled from farther serving their country in a military capacity. One exception, Sir, I know there is, and I need not tell gentlemen that I have in my eye one military person, great in his character, great in his capacity, great in the important offices he has discharged, who wants nothing to make him still greater but to be stripped of all the posts, of all the places he now enjoys.—But that, Sir, they dare not do †."

In the common topics of opposition, the duke of Argyle felt no embarrassment, but when an accusation was brought forwards for past transactions, which had taken place during his continuance in administration, in the support of which he had been active and zealous, he felt himself in an awkward situation. It was not possible to reconcile his invective against the minister with his well-known and often repeated apothegm, That all first ministers had been faulty, but that Sir Robert Walpole had the least faults of any minister with whom he had ever been concerned ‡. As an apology, therefore, for his first supporting, and afterwards arraigning the same measures, he in-

* The progress of party prejudice is well exemplified in the "Opinions of Sarah, duchess of Marlborough," who entertained a strong contempt and aversion for the duke of Argyle, while he supported Sir Robert Walpole, but instantly changed her opinion in his favour, when the duke entered the lists of opposition.

"1738.—It is said the duke of Argyle is extremely angry. It is a common saying, that when a house is to fall the rats go away; but I doubt there is nothing of that in this case, and I rather think the anger must be to have some new demand satisfied, which is a thing his grace has often done.

"1738.—After all the great noise there was of the duke of Argyle's being irreconcilably angry with Sir Robert; every thing has passed since in the house without his saying the

least word to shew it; that was no surprise to me.

"1738-9.—I think it is quite sure that the duke of Argyle is determined, and has thrown away the scabbard, and he uses to have a very quick fight when it was time to leave a minister.

"1738-9.—The duke of Argyle spoke charmingly (on the convention with Spain) and has certainly thrown away the scabbard.

"1738-9.—All the hatred I once had to him, upon a very just account, is now turned into love.

"1740-1.—The duke of Argyle spoke as well as it was possible for a man to do."

† Tindal, vol. 20. p. 404.

‡ The Duke of Argyle's Speech answered, p. 31, 32.

fitted

fisted that the minister had engrossed the whole power of government, that the privy council was excluded from all knowledge of the proceedings, and that the measures were only submitted to them for approbation, and not for examination. He mentioned himself as a witness of the truth of this statement. For although he was commander in chief, yet the knowledge of many material transactions had been withheld from him. He said that there were two cabinet councils in the kingdom, the king had one, and the minister had another, and that the king's knew little or nothing of what was done in the other. He thus endeavoured to exculpate himself, and to throw on the minister the whole blame of past transactions, which he and his party were disposed to arraign, as arguments for his removal.

The duke of Argyle was a warm, impetuous and animated orator. He possessed great fluency of language and elegance of diction. His speeches were highly declamatory, and filled with affected expressions of candour, conviction, and disinterestedness. They had always a very great effect, by appearing to be unpremeditated effusions flowing from the occasion and adapted to the moment. They were accompanied with all the graces of elocution, gesture, and dignity of manner. His eloquence was highly celebrated by Pope and Thomson*.

As there was great reason to apprehend that the court of Spain would not fulfil her engagements, by paying the £. 95,000, the king sent a message to both houses of parliament, expressing hopes that they would enable him to make such farther augmentations of his forces, both by sea and land, and to concert such measures as the emergency of affairs might require during the recess of parliament. The house of lords returned an address, assuring him of their support. The commons resolved, that towards enabling the king to augment his forces, if necessary, the sum of £. 500,000 should be granted.

The vote of credit.

They also voted £. 60,000, which, according to the terms of the convention, were due to Spain for the ships taken in 1718, and this sum, with the £. 95,000, was to be applied towards making satisfaction to his majesty's injured subjects for their losses. The session was, soon after,

- * "Argyle, the state's whole thunder born to wield,
"And shake alike the senate and the field."

And Thomson says of him,

_____ "from his rich tongue
"Persuasion flows, and wins the high debate."

closed!

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1737 to 1742.

June 14.

Farther transactions with Spain.

closed by prorogation. The king's message, the address of the lords, and resolutions of the commons, were sent to Mr. Keene, who was ordered to acquaint La Quadra, now marquis of Villarias, that this was a provisional power which was thought necessary to be given during the recess of parliament, should any emergency occur which concerned the honour, interest, and safety of the king's dominions, and ought not to excite jealousy, and that the grant of the £. 60,000, to be paid by England, if Spain would discharge the £. 95,000, within the time limited by the convention, was a proof of the king's design to fulfil his engagements. But this conciliating language had no effect. The face of affairs was totally changed in Spain; the haughty and insulting language of the English parliament and people disgusted and provoked that sensitive nation, and for some time all the actions of the Spanish court fully proved their determined resolution not to fulfil the terms of the convention.

The Spanish ministers made bitter remonstrances on the continuance of admiral Haddock's fleet in the Mediterranean, which they considered as insulting their coasts*.

May 5.

May 17.

May 23.

When the plenipotentiaries met, the Spanish full powers were not so extensive as the British, and the meeting was adjourned on that account. Villarias declared, on application being made from the South Sea company, that the king of Spain would listen to no proposal on the part of the company until the £. 68,000 was paid. When the plenipotentiaries met, and the full powers were allowed to be drawn up in due form, de la Quintana, one of the Spanish plenipotentiaries, announced, in the name of his master, that while the British squadron remained in the Mediterranean, no *grace or facilities* were to be expected, that the English were to be treated according to the rules of the most rigid justice, as the honour of the king of Spain would not permit any condescension while such a scourge hung over them. The king of Spain himself, bitterly complained to Mr. Keene of the insult offered to his honour, by the continuance of the British squadron on his coast, and declared, that as the South Sea company "refused to pay the £. 68,000, he thought himself at liberty to revoke the *asiento* for negroes, and to seize their effects as an indemnification for that sum†."

After this audience, Villarias signified to Mr. Keene, that his master considered the peace at an end; that there was no dependence on the promises of the British court; insisted on the claim of searching ships in the American seas, and concluded by intimating, that if that claim was not

* Account of the negotiation with Spain, Walpole Papers.

† Tindal, vol. 20. p. 419. admitted

admitted as the basis of future negotiations, there could be no occasion for any farther conference *. This was justly considered as a prelude to the declaration of war; the most vigorous preparations were made in England for offensive operations; Haddock, who was cruising off Cadiz, was considerably reinforced; Sir John Norris hoisted the union flag on board the *Namur*, at Chatham; Sir Chaloner Ogle was ordered to the West Indies with a large force, while Horace Walpole embarked for Holland to require the quota of troops, stipulated by treaties in case of a war.

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1739.

The ministry had sent to Mr. Keene his last instructions, which were, to declare that the king insisted on a full renunciation on the part of Spain, of all claims of searching British ships, as the basis of a future treaty, and that the honour of the British crown and nation would not suffer any farther negotiations, but upon that condition. He likewise demanded, in very peremptory terms, the immediate execution of all that had been stipulated on the part of Spain by the convention, and that the British rights to Georgia and Carolina should be expressly acknowledged in the future treaty. He farther observed, that the failure of the crown of Spain to fulfil the terms of the convention, had given a new turn to the state of affairs between the two courts, which intitled his Britannic majesty to be more peremptory, and to rise in his demands, especially considering the vast expences which the Spanish breach of faith had obliged Great Britain to incur, in armaments both by sea and land. Mr. Keene, as usual, received an evasive answer, but renewed his applications to the Spanish ministry, and firmly told them, that his court had adopted a resolution of granting their subjects liberty to make reprisals on the Spaniards, and that he was ordered to leave Spain if he did not immediately receive a satisfactory answer †.

The reply amounted to a declaration of war. The Spanish court, secretly instigated by the French, eager to obtain the assiento contract, and to become the carriers of the Spanish trade into the West Indies, rejected so dishonourable a compromise, and prepared for hostilities with unusual activity. The British cabinet issued letters of reprisals, and Admiral Vernon was sent with nine men of war to intercept the *Assogue* ships in their passage from America to Spain, and then to reduce Porto Bello.

The declaration of war against Spain was received by all ranks and distinctions of men, with a degree of enthusiasm and joy, which announced the general frenzy of the nation. The bells were pealed in all the churches of

Oct. 19.
Declaration
of war.

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 419.

† Ibid. p. 421.

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London*; huzzas and acclamations resounded on all sides; a numerous procession attended the heralds into the city, and the prince of Wales did not deem it a degradation to accompany it, and to stop at the door of the Rose Tavern, Temple Bar, and drink success to the war. The stocks, which had been some time on the decline, rose instantaneously. This unusual circumstance, at the opening of a war, was owing to the sanguine expectation, that hostilities would be carried on at the expence of the enemy. The possessions of Spain in the West Indies were considered as likely to fall an easy prey to the British adventurers. The merchants anticipated the monopoly of the commerce with South America, and the possessions of the mines of Peru and Potosi. But these idle dreams of riches and conquest soon proved fallacious; what the minister had foreseen, now happened: England stood singly engaged in war without an ally.

The Spanish manifesto fully justified the conduct of Spain, and proved to impartial Europe, that though in the refusal to pay the £.95,000, she appeared to be the aggressor, the English were the real aggressors, and that while affecting to comply with the letter, they had violated the spirit of the treaty. France artfully availed herself of these circumstances; while she armed both by sea and land, with a view to intimidate England, and to join Spain, whenever a favourable opportunity should occur, she artfully offered her mediation to compose the differences, and prevailed on the Dutch to maintain a state of neutrality, by threatening them with an army of 50,000 men towards the Low Countries, and alluring them with hopes of sharing the spoils of the trade which the English carried on to Spanish America.

Conduct of
England:

On reviewing the conduct of England, from the renewal of the disputes concerning the Spanish depredations in 1737, to the declaration of war, we shall not hesitate to confess, that it was inconsistent, unjust, haughty, and violent.

The British nation listened only to one side of the question, gave implicit credit to all the exaggerated accounts of the cruelties committed by the Spaniards without due evidence, and without noticing the violations of express treaties by the British traders. The difficulty of obtaining an accurate statement of facts, which had passed in the American seas, was seldom taken into consideration. Instant and full reparation for damages, not sufficiently authenticated, and always over-rated, was loudly and repeatedly called for.

* It is recorded, that Sir Robert Walpole, hearing the bells ringing, inquired the cause of such rejoicings, and was informed that the

bells were ringing for the declaration of war. They now ring the bells, he replied, but they will soon *wring* their hands.

The

The cry of *No search* echoed from one part of the kingdom to another, and reverberated from London to Madrid. The common topics of justice and humanity were forgotten amidst the public ardour; a general enthusiasm pervaded all ranks of people, and the religious crusade against the Saracens, in an age of bigotry and ignorance, was not prosecuted with greater fervour than the commercial crusade against Spain, in an enlightened century. The crown of Spain was reviled and degraded in the eyes of Europe, by the petulance of declamatory eloquence; imperious messages were sent to Madrid, and the most haughty and irritable court in Europe, provoked and insulted beyond the possibility of farther forbearance.

The public conduct of the minister is also liable to much animadversion, though from a different cause. And of Walpole.

Burke says, "I observed one fault in his general proceeding. He never manfully put forward the entire strength of his cause. He temporised; he managed; and adopting very nearly the sentiments of his adversaries, he opposed their inferences. This, for a political commander, is the choice of a weak post. His adversaries had the better of the argument, as he handled it, not as the reason and justice of his cause enabled him to manage it. I say this, after having seen, and with some care examined the original documents, concerning certain important transactions of those times. They perfectly satisfied me of the extreme injustice of that war, and of the falshood of the colours, which, to his own ruin, and guided by a mistaken policy, he suffered to be daubed over that measure. Some years after, it was my fortune to converse with many of the principal actors against that minister, and with those who principally excited that clamour. None of them, no not one, did in the least defend the measure, or attempt to justify their conduct, which they as freely condemned as they would have done in commenting upon any proceeding in history in which they were totally unconcerned. Thus it will be. They who stir up the people to improper desires, whether of peace or war, will be condemned by themselves. They who weakly yield to them, will be condemned by history *."

These observations are perfectly just; but the sagacious author did not sufficiently consider, and perhaps did not know, the delicate situation of the minister, and the embarrassments under which he laboured at this particular juncture. Walpole himself well knew the strength of the arguments, which might have been produced against the assertions of the minority. He was aware, that the British who traded to the South Seas, were principally

* *Thoughts on a Regicide Peace*, p. 23.

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engaged in carrying on an illicit trade, and in importing and exporting illicit goods; that few of the captures were illegal; and that the Spaniards, though they might in some instances have transgressed the bounds of strict justice, yet in general were sufficiently vindicated by the conduct and behaviour of the British traders.

The fact was, that the nation could not hear the truth; the minds of all men were so inflamed with tales of cruelties, that any attempts to contradict them were wholly ineffectual. The minister himself could not venture to question or decry them.

An insinuation thrown out by some of his friends, that the British ships in the West Indies carried on smuggling, contrary to treaties, and to the true interest of the fair-trader, was received with high indignation, and represented by opposition, as a reflection cast upon the whole body of English merchants in America*. Nor need any other proof be given of the general infatuation and frenzy, which prevented the voice of truth and reason from being heard, than that the fable of Jenkins's ears was fully credited, and that no one could venture to call in question the truth of that absurd story. He was obliged therefore to confine the defence of the convention to the expediency of the measure, the inconveniences of war, and the advantages of peace, with such general arguments as were answered and nullified by impassioned appeals to the feelings and honour of an injured and insulted nation.

His opposition to the war, drew upon him odium and unpopularity from all quarters. Even many of those who voted with him from personal considerations, were equally free in their complaints of his indolence, want of spirit, and aversion to vigorous measures, for vindicating the national honour, and chastising the insolence of Spanish depredations.

Inclination of
the king.

The king was eager for war. Inspired by a martial spirit and natural magnanimity, he was disposed to seek reparation of injuries by military operations, preferably to the slower and less splendid methods of negotiation.

Divisions in
the cabinet.

By the death of queen Caroline, Walpole had lost his principal protectress; one who uniformly appreciated his counsels and promoted his views; who maintained in the king's mind those favourable sentiments, which those who were about his person, were labouring to change. Her decease gave full scope to the intrigues of a strong party in the cabinet, who inclined for war, and opposed those measures which the minister wished to adopt.

The duke of Newcastle was particularly vehement in supporting the contents of the petition, which the merchants had delivered to the king in 1737.

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 366.

In conformity to this statement of the grievances, he drew up an angry memorial, which Keene was ordered to present to the Spanish ministers, in which he endeavoured to prove that the Spaniards had broken the articles in several treaties, and particularly alluded to the treaty of 1667. This memorial* was forwarded to Keene, to be presented to the court of Madrid, and Horace Walpole was ordered to draw up a similar one, to be presented to the States General. But the sagacity of Horace Walpole saw the fact in a very different light. He was fully sensible that the treaty of 1667, referred only to the trade which Great Britain was permitted to carry on to the Spanish dominions in Europe only, and had no reference to the American commerce. This opinion he represented with his usual freedom, and proved by undoubted documents †.

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Sir Robert Walpole adopted this mode of thinking, and objected to Newcastle's memorial. But being unsupported by the king, and the other members of the cabinet, he was compelled to withdraw his opposition, and assent to the measure. Even when the convention was ratified, and the settling of the disputes referred to an amicable composition, Newcastle adopted the opinions and language of opposition, and observed, in a letter to the British minister at Madrid:

"His majesty's view and design is, that this commission should not, like some former ones, be drawn into length and produce no effect; but that all points in dispute between the two crowns, may be thoroughly examined, and finally settled and adjusted; so that a perfect good understanding may be established between the two nations; *which is impossible to be done, as long as the depredations continue in any manner; and therefore the king does expect, that the freedom of navigation of his subjects may be effectually secured to them; that they may neither be liable to be taken or searched in their navigation in the American seas, to and from any part of his majesty's dominions ‡.*"

The chancellor, lord Hardwicke, a man of moderation, good sense, and candour, was of the same opinion with the duke of Newcastle, and spoke with such vehemence in the house of lords against the depredations, and in favour of compulsory measures, that Walpole, who stood behind the throne, exclaimed to those who were near him, "Bravo colonel Yorke, Bravo §." Lord Harrington inclined to the sentiments of Newcastle and Hardwicke. The earl of Wilmington was always blindly attached to the opinion of the king, and therefore favoured the war. He repented that he had declined

* Keene and Walpole Papers.

† Walpole Papers.

‡ Duke of Newcastle to Benjamin Keene,

Whitehall, January 26, 1737-8. Walpole Papers.

§ From the late earl of Hardwicke.

accepting

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accepting the employments which had been offered to him on the death of George the First; his hopes revived on the decease of queen Caroline; he aspired to the station of first minister, and by his secret influence in the closet, occasionally thwarted and counteracted the advice of Walpole.

The only members of the cabinet of whom Walpole was secure, were Sir Charles Wager, the earl of Godolphin, who had succeeded lord Lonsdale in the office of privy seal, which he retained in compliance with the wishes of the minister, to whom he was uniformly and inviolably attached, and the duke of Devonshire, who was occasionally absent in Ireland.

Many measures were also adopted which he did not approve, and many persons appointed to commands, particularly admiral Vernon, in opposition to his wishes. The letters of reprisal were issued contrary to his opinion. Newcastle had adapted the declaration of war to the public opinion*, in direct contradiction to his known sentiments, on the basis of principles which held up the delay of hostilities to censure, and, as the minister thought, with a view to cast an odium upon him. The declaration had been approved by the cabinet, and was on the point of being issued in this form, when a strong remonstrance of Horace Walpole † to the lord chancellor, induced the secretary of state to amend this important paper.

Lord Hervey
privy seal.

In opposition
to Newcastle.

A still greater source of discord had been derived from the resolution of the minister to obtain the privy seal for lord Harvey, who had uniformly proved his attachment, and had strenuously supported his administration, by speeches, and by his pen. Godolphin, who had succeeded lord Lonsdale in that high office, had announced his intention of retiring, but had delayed the resignation at the request of Walpole, until the difficulties which obstructed the nomination of Hervey could be removed. That nobleman had, by his sarcastic and petulant raillery, rendered himself so highly disagreeable to Newcastle, that in a letter to lord chancellor Hardwicke, he observed, "Sir Robert Walpole and Pulteney are not more opposite in the house of commons, than lord Hervey and I are, with regard to our mutual inclinations to each other, in our house ‡. He strongly represented the objections to his promotion, and the ill effects which would be derived from it. He proposed, rather than submit, that the duke of Grafton, the lord chancellor, his brother Mr. Pelham, and himself should resign; and even if they should not accede to this measure, avowed his resolution singly to retire, rather than bear what he considered as a personal insult. He made also strong remon-

* Duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, September 30, 1739.

† Horace Walpole to lord Hardwicke. Correspondence.

‡ Duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, October 14, 1739. Hardwicke Papers.

stances on the subject to Sir Robert Walpole, and a violent altercation passed between them at Claremont. Notwithstanding these positive declarations, the minister persevered in his resolution. Lord Hervey was at length appointed lord privy seal, and Newcastle, either finding his co-adjutors not inclined to resign in compliance with his request, and softened by the chancellor and his brother, suppressed his disgust, and acquiesced in the nomination.

The situation of the minister was rendered still more irksome, by the occasional ill-humour of the king, who thwarted and counteracted his views, at the very moment when he most wanted his assistance. Several instances of a pertinacious refusal of the minister's just requests, appeared in the course of this summer. But one in particular, will serve to shew the extreme embarrassments under which he laboured.

Horace Walpole had served, with little interruption, in the quality of envoy, plenipotentiary, or ambassador from 1722 to 1739. He had performed his functions with unremitting assiduity and address; and had rendered himself eminently useful in the conduct of foreign affairs. He had been for some time weary of his employment, and expressed an earnest desire to return to England. On the death of queen Caroline, his situation abroad became more difficult. Contradictory orders were occasionally issued from London and Hanover. The opinion and advice which he freely gave, were not always congenial to the king's German prejudices. He incurred displeasure by the frankness with which he declared his sentiments on all occasions, and the courage with which he opposed the petty electoral views, which sometimes interfered with the grand interests of Great Britain and Europe. Frequent bickerings with lord Harrington, rendered his continuance abroad more and more irksome, and he resisted all the importunities of his brother, enforced by the earnest representation of the chancellor, for whom he entertained the highest esteem, and persevered in his resolution to retire from the diplomatic line.

The state of affairs, and temper of the Dutch, who were pressed by England on one side, and by France on the other, required a person of great abilities, address, and circumspection, agreeable to the leading men of the republic, well acquainted with the forms of their complicated constitution, and capable of obviating the dilatoriness of their counsels. It was necessary also, that the successor should be attached to the minister, and likely to follow the directions of Horace Walpole. Such a person was Robert Trevor, second son of lord Trevor, who had, from the commencement of Horace Walpole's embassy to the Hague, served in the capacity of private secretary, and during

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during his absence, had acted as chargé d'affaires. He was distinguished no less for his discretion than his talents, and his dispatches were peculiarly interesting and animated.

But the king had entertained a violent prejudice against Trevor, and though he could not with justice or policy object to his nomination, yet he clogged his mission with so many difficulties as nearly prevented it, and when those difficulties were finally overcome, he positively refused to confer on him the united character of envoy and plenipotentiary, with the salary of eight pounds a day, but insisted that he should be only appointed envoy, with a salary of no more than five pounds. The repeated solicitations of Walpole, in compliance with his brother's wishes, had no effect, all his attempts to persuade the king were ineffectual.

Trevor had received from Horace Walpole a promise of his recommendation, and as he knew the affection of Sir Robert Walpole for his brother, and believed his influence all powerful in the closet, he had considered his appointment to the offices of envoy and plenipotentiary, as certain as if it had passed the great seal. When, therefore, the minister acquainted him with the king's inflexibility, he declined accepting the grant of envoy alone, as degrading to himself, declared that, on account of the smallness of his own fortune, the salary of five pounds a day was insufficient to maintain an establishment, in a style and manner conformable to usage, and consonant to the dignity of his station.

The minister never felt himself more chagrined. He was concerned lest his brother should impute to him a lukewarmness in promoting his friend, and procuring a post which had been solemnly promised. He was apprehensive lest Trevor should conceive his influence over the king greater than it really was, and should suspect him of duplicity, and he was at the same time convinced, that no person was so proper to be employed at the Hague. He therefore frankly represented his situation to his brother; he expressed his inability to prevail over the king, and intimated, that should Trevor decline the appointment of envoy, the consequence would be the increase of the king's disgust, and the nomination of another person, who might be both incapable of discharging his functions, and be disagreeable to them. He therefore earnestly entreated his brother to obtain the acquiescence of his friend. His exhortation prevailed; Trevor, at the suggestion of Horace Walpole, complied, and succeeded him at the Hague, in the quality of envoy only.

Horace Walpole returned to England, and soon afterwards resigned the place of cofferer of the household for a tellership of the exchequer. He took no farther share in public business, than in giving his assistance to his brother

in

in the management of foreign affairs, and strenuously supporting his measures in parliament.

Thus situated, and thus embarrassed, thwarted by the king, counteracted by the cabinet, reviled by the nation, and compelled to declare war against his own opinion, a simple and natural question arises; Why did he not resign? Why did he still maintain a post exposed to so many difficulties, and subject to so much obloquy? His intimate friends urged him to take this step, when the convention was carried in the house of commons by a majority of 28. In fact, he did request the king's permission to resign*. He stated his embarrassments: He observed, that his opposition to this war would be always imputed as a crime, and that any ill success in carrying it on would be attributed to him. The king remonstrated against this resolution, exclaiming, "Will you desert me in my greatest difficulties?" and refused to admit his resignation. The minister reiterated his wishes, and the king again imposed silence in so authoritative a manner, that he acquiesced, and remained at the helm.

But his compliance with the king's commands is by no means sufficient for his justification. Had he come forward on this occasion, and declared that he had opposed the war as unjust, and contrary to the interests of his country, but finding that the voice of the people was clamorous for hostilities, he had therefore quitted a station which he could not preserve with dignity, as he was unwilling to conduct the helm of government, when he could not guide it at his own discretion, and to be responsible for measures which he did not approve: Had he acted this noble and dignified part, he would have risen in the opinion of his own age, and have secured the applause of posterity.

The consequence of his continuance in office was repeated mortifications from those with whom he acted, and insults from those who opposed him, and that in less than two years from this period, he was reduced to a compulsory resignation.

The truth is, that he had neither resolution or inclination to persevere in a sacrifice which circumstances seemed to require, and to quit a station which long possession had endeared to him. But ministers are but men; human nature does not reach to perfection; and who ever quitted power without a sigh, or looked back to it without regret?

* Correspondence between Horace Walpole and Etough. Walpole and Etough Papers.

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CHAPTER THE FIFTY-FOURTH:

1739—1741.

Meeting of Parliament.—Return of the Seceders.—Efforts of Opposition.—Embarrassments of Walpole.—Supplies.—Capture of Porto-Bello.—Expedition to America.—Altercations in the Cabinet.—Foreign Affairs.—Death of the King of Prussia.—Of the Emperor.—Invasion of Silesia.

Meeting of
parliament,
November
15.
King's
speech.

THE declaration of war rendered it necessary that the parliament should be assembled at an earlier season than usual. The king, in his speech from the throne, spoke a language which could not have been stronger, had it been dictated by opposition. In the opening, he observed, "The present posture of our affairs has obliged me to call you together at this time, sooner than has been usual of late years, that I may have the immediate advice and assistance of my parliament, at this critical and important conjuncture. I have, in all my proceedings with the court of Spain, acted agreeably to the sense of both houses, and therefore I can make no doubt, but I shall meet with a ready and vigorous support in this just and necessary war, which the repeated injuries and violence committed by that nation upon the navigation and commerce of these kingdoms, and their obstinacy and notorious violation of the most solemn engagements, have rendered unavoidable."

He then mentioned the augmentation of his forces, and the confidence he had in being furnished with the necessary supplies. After adverting to the heats and animosities which had, with the greatest industry, been fomented throughout the kingdom, and had chiefly encouraged the proceedings of the court of Spain, he concluded by observing, "Union among all those who have nothing at heart but the true interest of Great Britain, and a becoming zeal in the defence of my kingdoms, and in the support of the common cause of our country, with as general a concurrence in carrying on the war, as there has appeared for engaging in it, will make the court of Spain repent the wrongs they have done us; and convince those, who mean the subversion of the present establishment, that this nation is determined, and able, both to vindicate their injured honour, and to defend themselves against all our open and secret enemies, both at home and abroad *."

* Journals. Chandler.

In the house of lords, the address passed, though not without much altercation from the peers in opposition, at the mention of heats and animosities, almost without a division, and on a division, the numbers were 68 against 41 *.

In the commons it occasioned a warm and violent debate, which did not so much relate to the subject of the address, as to the return of the seceding members to their duty. Mr. Archer having moved the address, which was as usual the echo of the speech, Pulteney began by vindicating the secession. He enforced the necessity of that measure, for the purpose of clearing their characters to posterity, from the imputation of sitting in an assembly, where a determined majority gave a sanction to measures evidently disgraceful to the king and the nation. "This step," he said, "however it has been hitherto censured, will I hope, for the future, be treated in a different manner, for it is fully justified by the declaration of war, so universally approved, that any farther vindication will be superfluous. There is not an assertion maintained in it, that was not, almost in the same words, insisted upon by those who opposed the convention. Since that time, there has not one event happened that was not then foreseen and foretold. But give me leave to say, Sir, that though the treatment which we have since received from the court of Spain, may have swelled the account, yet it has furnished us with no new reasons for declaring war; the same provocations have only been repeated, and nothing but longer patience has added to the justice of our cause. The same violation of treaties, the same instances of injustice and barbarity, the same disregard to the law of nations, which are laid down as the reasons of this declaration, were then too flagrant to be denied, and too contemptuous to be borne. Nor can any one reason be alledged for justifying our going to war now, that was not of equal force before the convention. After that was ratified, and after the address of parliament to his majesty on that head, there was indeed some sort of pretext for not commencing hostilities, because you had laid yourselves under a kind of obligation, to see if the court of Spain would fulfil their part of the stipulations; but this was a reason that could have no place before that conduct was entered into and approved. It is therefore evident, that if the war be now necessary, it was necessary before the convention. Of this necessity the gentlemen (known, however improperly, by the name of *Seceders*) were then fully convinced. They saw, instead of that ardour of resentment, and that zeal for the honour of Britain, which such indignities ought to have

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Proceedings
of the lords.

November.

Of the commons.

* Lords' Debates.

Period VII. 1737 to 1742. produced, nothing but meanness, and tameness, and submission; and their natural consequences, a low, temporary expedient, a shameful convention; a convention, which had the Spaniards not madly broken it, must have ended in our ruin, must have thrown our own navigation into the hands of our enemies. To such a conduct as this they could give no sanction; they saw that all opposition was ineffectual, and that their presence was only made use of, that what was already determined might be ratified by the plausible appearance of a fair debate. They therefore seceded, if that word must be used on this occasion, and refused to countenance measures which they could neither approve nor defeat.

"The state of affairs is now changed; the measures of the ministry are now altered; and the same regard for the honour and welfare of their country, that determined these gentlemen to withdraw their countenance from such a conduct as they thought had a tendency to destroy them, the same has brought them hither once more, to give their advice and assistance in those measures, which they then pointed out, as the only means of asserting and retrieving them." He then observed, that the only method to preserve the trade and navigation of Great Britain from any future violation, was to attack the Spanish settlements in the West Indies, and to prevent any minister from giving up our conquests, under any pretence whatsoever; declared his readiness to support ministry in carrying on the war with vigour and advantage; expressed his wishes, that no mention had been made of heats and animosities in the king's speech, and thought that the dignity and reputation of the house would be consulted, if the address should take no notice of that clause in the speech *.

To this Sir Robert Walpole replied: "After what passed last session, and after the repeated declarations of the honourable gentleman who spoke last, and his friends, I little expected that we should have this session been again favoured with their company. I am always pleased, Sir, when I see gentlemen in the way of their duty, and glad that these gentlemen have returned to their's; though, to say the truth, I was in no great concern lest the service either of his majesty or the nation should suffer by their absence. I believe the nation is generally sensible, that the many useful and popular acts which passed towards the end of last session, were greatly forwarded and facilitated by the secession of these gentlemen, and if they are returned only to oppose and perplex, I shall not at all be sorry if they secede again.

"The honourable gentleman who spoke last said, that they took this step,

* Chandler.

because he and his friends conceived that measures were pursued which tended to ruin the honour and interest of this nation, and that they have returned to their duty, because these measures are now at an end. Sir, I don't remember any one step which was taken in the whole of our transactions with Spain, and has not been fully canvassed in parliament, and as fully approved. The parliament can best judge what is fit or not fit to be done, and while I have the honour of bearing any share in the administration, I shall think myself safe, and my actions compleatly justified, if they are, after mature deliberation, approved by a British parliament. The stale argument of corruption never shall have any weight with me; it has been the common refuge of the disappointed and disaffected ever since government had a being; and it is an accusation, that like all other charges, though unsupported by proof, if advanced against the best and most disinterested administration, and pushed with a becoming violence, a pretended zeal for the public good, will never fail to meet applause among the populace. I cannot, however, believe that the honourable gentleman and his friends, have found any reason to boast of the effects produced by their secession upon the minds of the people, for it was a very new way of defending the interests of their constituents, to desert them when they apprehended them to be endangered. I should not have touched so much upon this subject, had I not been in a manner called upon to do it, by what fell from the honourable gentleman who spoke last. I shall now proceed to take some notice of what he further advanced.

"The declaration of war against Spain, is neither more nor less than the consequence, which the king again and again informed this house, would arise from the Spaniards persisting in their refusal to do justice to his injured subjects; and what the honourable gentleman has said upon that head, amounts to nothing more than that, after the Spaniards had absolutely refused to do that justice, his majesty proceeded to those measures which he had then more than once promised to take. I am sorry that the honourable gentleman should so far distrust the royal assurances, as rather to absent himself from his duty as a member of this house, than put any confidence in his majesty's promise. But give me leave to say Sir, that, from the well known character of his majesty, this declaration of war is no more than what the honourable gentleman and his friends had not only reason, but a right to expect, even at the time of their secession, if the continued injustice of the court of Spain should make it necessary to have recourse to arms. So that upon the whole, I neither see how his majesty's not issuing this declaration of war, when they were pleased to require it, was a good reason for their
running

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running from their duty; nor how its being issued at last is any apology for their return *."

After a few reflections on the impropriety of Pulteney's proposals, and some observations by Sir John Barnard on the want of convoys, which were answered by Sir Charles Wager, the address was carried without a division.

The conduct of the minister during this whole session, proved the extreme embarrassments under which he laboured, the little dependence he could generally place on those who supported him, and the effect which the public voice had upon the decisions of the commons.

Bill for encouragement
of seamen.
Nov. 16.

When Pulteney moved to bring in the bill for the security of trade and encouragement of seamen, which had been thrown out last session by the exertions of the minister, he opposed it with much warmth, and demanded that the measure should be postponed for the purpose of taking it into consideration †. On the first reading, however, he did not venture to continue his opposition, and after a slight animadversion by Horace Walpole, it passed without a division. Although the minister appreciated the injustice of depriving the public of all share in the prize money, and of annihilating at once a great source of revenue, which might assist government in carrying on the war, yet he dreaded to resist so popular a measure, and to offend the navy of England.

Address to
the king.

The agreement of the minister to the war, and the vigorous manner in which it was conducted, distressed opposition, by taking from them the most popular topic of declamation and obloquy. They endeavoured, therefore, to introduce motions of so violent a tendency, as should preclude all hopes of a reconciliation with Spain, trusting that the minister would oppose them as being contradictory to his pacific system, and would by that resistance increase the national aversion. Accordingly, Sir William Wyndham, after a violent Philippic against administration, moved for an address, testifying a resolution to support the king in the prosecution of the war, and beseeching him "never to admit of any treaty of peace with Spain, unless the acknowledgment of our natural and indubitable right to navigate in the American seas, to and from any part of his majesty's dominions, without being searched, visited, or stopped, under any pretence whatsoever, shall have been first obtained, as a preliminary thereto ‡."

February 21,
1740.

As the tendency of this motion was well understood by the minister, and as it was made with the hopes of being rejected, he disappointed their views.

* Chandler.

† Ibid.

‡ Journals. Tindal.

After briefly vindicating his conduct from the reproaches of Sir William Wyndham, he declared that he was the first to agree to the motion, and it accordingly passed, without a dissenting voice. The concurrence of the lords being obtained, the address was accordingly presented by both houses.

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1739 to 1741.

When the place bill was brought before the house, the minister departed from his usual custom, of giving only his silent vote; he spoke against it with great strength of argument. All his efforts, however, could only procure a small majority of 16, 222 against 206 *. The cause of this numerous minority, was principally owing to the approach of a general election, which influenced many who favoured administration, to vote for the question.

Place bill
rejected.

February.

The efforts of opposition compelled him to relinquish a bill, to which he had paid considerable attention, and which he thought essentially necessary for the speedy equipment of the fleet. Government felt sensible inconveniences from their inability to man their ships of war. According to an account given in last year, upon a medium no more than twenty-one thousand five hundred and sixteen seamen had been mustered on board the royal navy, from the 31st of December 1738 to the 31st of December 1739. The public clamour at the same time, on account of the numerous captures made by the Spaniards, hourly increasing, produced many warm petitions and remonstrances. The method of impressing, served only to increase the discontent of the merchants, who were perpetually plying both houses of parliament with complaints that their trade was neglected. The matter was therefore referred to a committee, who found invincible obstacles in their endeavours to remedy the inconvenience any other way, than by establishing a general register of all seamen and watermen capable of service. A bill to this effect was accordingly presented to the house by Sir Charles Wager †.

Bill for re-
gistering sea-
men.

February 5.

The opposition fairly allowed the expediency of the bill, but expatiated with great effect on the hardships which it would entail upon the seaman, who must appear whenever summoned, at all hazards, whatever might be the circumstances of his family, or the state of his private affairs; he must, in many cases, expose himself to the penalties of the act, or leave his family at a time when his assistance and direction are absolutely necessary. He must, if he should by any misfortune or negligence, be encumbered with debt, either fall under the distresses which the breach of this law would bring upon him, or lie at the mercy of his creditors, perhaps exasperated by long disappointments, or by long practice of severity hardened in oppression.

* Journals. Chandler, vol. 11. where see Walpole's admirable speech on the occasion, p. 233.

† Tindal, p. 450. Chandler.

Period VII. Pulteney proposed to defer the second reading a few days, and to print the bill for the consideration of the house.

1737 to 1742.

To these arguments the minister replied, by declaring that the impress of seamen, to which government must always have recourse in times of emergency, was neither eligible or legal, that it was ineffectual and insufficient for the attainment of its end; that the delay in procuring sailors at the commencement of a war, was a general grievance and a great obstruction to offensive operations, and to the acquisition of conquests which would be easy at first, but afterwards became difficult. "While we are publishing proclamations," he said, "issuing warrants for impresses, and gleaning up our sailors by single men, our secrets are betrayed, and our enterprizes defeated." He did not, however, object to the proposal for printing the bill, and delaying the second reading a proper time, which was ordered accordingly.

During this suspension, great outcry was raised against the bill, as founded on French edicts, and as tending to the introduction of French measures and French despotism, and the restrictions which it would have imposed on the sailors, which were not inconsiderable, were as usual magnified and exaggerated. The public mind was inflamed to such a degree, that when the bill was presented to be read a second time, it was received with a silent horror, as a transcript of the French edict for the same purport, and tending to enslave the most useful body of men in the kingdom. Sir Charles Wager and Sir John Norris, who had prepared the bill, candidly admitted the charge, that it was founded on a similar ordinance, but declared that it was the only expedient which they could devise, to effect the purpose for which it was designed. The minister, however, was disinclined to support a bill, against which such strong objections were made. He was therefore one of the first to suggest the propriety of dropping it, and it was accordingly rejected. "A motion was then made for the house to resolve itself into a committee the Monday following, to consider of the heads of a bill, for the further and better encouragement of seamen to enter into his majesty's service; but this resolution, however well intended, never produced the desired effect, though it seemed to be agreed upon by all parties, that a register was absolutely necessary; and the first resolution which the committee came to, March the 13th, was, that a voluntary register of seamen would be of great utility to the kingdom*."

Dropped.

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 451. Sir Charles Wager introduced a similar bill in the next session, though with an alteration of the most exceptionable parts. Every paragraph was

obstinately contested. Some exceptionable clauses were corrected, and several amendments made; after a long and well fought opposition, it passed by 155 against 79.

The

The opponents of the minister, sensible that he was not adequately supported, pressed him with motions tending to increase his embarrassment. Some prizes having been taken by the Spaniards, a motion was made in the house of commons, "For a list of ships of war employed as cruizers, for the protection of trade on this side Cape Finisterre, since the 10th of July last, distinguishing the time each ship was ordered to remain, and the time such ship did actually remain on such cruize, together with the reasons of her returning to any port of this kingdom." But as the rejection of this motion was highly arraigned, the minister agreed the following day to address the king "to give directions, that besides the ships of war employed against the enemy, a sufficient number of ships may be appointed to cruize in proper stations, for the effectual protection of trade." The public was extremely surprised that the ministry suffered this motion to pass, as it carried an oblique reflection upon themselves. But the truth was, that about this time, both the French and Dutch, under pretext of neutrality, had commenced carriers to the Spaniards, and upon being stopped and visited by the British ships, had made strong complaints that such practices were not warranted by the laws of nations, or by treaties. The court of England in answer, told them, that their complaints should be examined, but chose to leave it to the parliament, to express the sense of the public, in a matter that so nearly touched the national interest. When the address was presented, the king replied, "All possible care has been taken in carrying on the war against Spain, in the most proper and effectual manner, and at the same time, for protecting the trade of my subjects; and you may be assured, that the same care shall be continued." In consequence of this address, however, the building of twenty gun ships to act against the enemy's privateers, was hastened, and six ships of war, and store ships were sent to reinforce admiral Haddock in the Mediterranean.

But a still more dangerous measure was enforced by the opposition, which I shall give in the words of the contemporary historian so often quoted. "An embargo upon all shipping, except coasters, had continued, by order of the lords of the admiralty, from the 1st of February to the 28th of March, when a petition from the merchants and owners of ships, and others concerned in manufactures and commerce, was sent to the house of commons, complaining of the great hardships the continuance of the embargo brought upon trade in general; and containing some insinuations as if it had been continued through wantonness. The fact was, that the petitioners had been amongst the loudest in the outcry raised against government

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1739 to 1741.

Motion for
cruizers.
March 23.

Petition
against the
embargo.

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1737 to 1742.

for not protecting their trade; and as that clamour increased, the necessity of employing more seamen increased likewise. The lords of the admiralty had employed every fair means in their power to procure seamen, but without success, till they were reduced to the disagreeable alternative of either imposing the embargo, or permitting the service of the public to suffer. To give all the ease, however, in their power to trade, they soon took off the embargo on foreign ships, and acquainted the masters of British ships, that they were willing to take it off entirely, if every master, or merchant, or owner of a ship, would, in proportion to their number of hands, contribute to the supply of the navy. Though nothing could be more reasonable, and indeed, necessary, than this conduct, yet it was represented, in the antiministerial speeches and writings, as an intolerable oppression upon commerce, calculated with a view to make the city of London, and the trading part of the nation, weary of the war. The ministry, however, did not think fit to comply with the prayer of the petition, which was, to be heard by counsel against the embargo. They very justly thought, that to admit counsel on such a head, was stripping his majesty and the government of one of their most unquestionable prerogatives; and the motion was therefore rejected by a majority of 166 against 95. This seasonable firmness of the government was attended with very good effects; for the merchants, at last, agreed to carry one third of their crew landmen, and to furnish one man in four to the king's ships; upon which condition their ships had protections granted them, and about the 14th of April, the embargo was taken off from all merchants ships in the ports of Great Britain and Ireland outward bound*."

Supplies.

Almost the only proposals of the minister which the minority did not resist, were those which related to supplies. In this instance, they were as liberal in granting the public money, as if they had forgotten their own repeated assertions, that the nation had been so much impoverished by Walpole, that it could not bear any farther burthens. The land tax was raised to four shillings in the pound; twelve hundred thousand pounds were taken from the sinking fund, and the whole amount of the supplies came to £. 4,059,722.

Bounties.

Many excellent laws in favour of commerce and navigation were passed during this session, and premiums were continued for the importation of masts, pitch, and tar; for encouraging the Greenland fishery, by allowing an additional bounty to all ships employed in the whale fishery during the war, and for protecting the men from being impressed.

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 456.

Not long before the prorogation of parliament, the news of the capture of Porto Bello, by Vernon, reached London; and as the admiral was strongly supported by opposition, and considered as personally obnoxious to the minister, so favourable an opportunity of distressing him, was not omitted. During the public rejoicings, the house of lords sent an address to the commons for their concurrence, in which they congratulated the king on the glorious success of his arms under the command of admiral Vernon, by taking Porto Bello with only six ships of war. When the address was brought to the commons, the words, with six ships of war only, were omitted. "But several of Vernon's friends, who had heard him declare in the house, that he could take Porto Bello with that force, insisted upon the insertion of those words. They were opposed by the few of the ministerial party who were in the house, who thought they conveyed a reproachful insinuation against the memory of admiral Hosier, and could only serve to revive the animosities of the public; but the addition being insisted upon, it was carried by 36 against 31, and being agreed to by the peers, was presented accordingly." It is justly observed by Tindal, "A Roman consul, after reducing a province, never received greater marks of public applause from his country, than admiral Vernon did upon the demolition of Porto Bello. His name, not only amongst the lower, but the most distinguished ranks, became proverbial for courage; his exploit was exaggerated beyond measure; meanings were suggested that never were intended, and consequences were drawn that never followed. The opposition, who counted upon Vernon as a creature of their own preferring, resolved to avail themselves of his name, and some of their heads entered into a correspondence with him, which has been since published, and in which they represented the minister and his friends, as secret enemies to his person and success, and themselves as the patrons of his glory, and the sureties for his conduct to the public. A man of Vernon's warm constitution and resentful temper, could not but be affected with those representations which he thought came from his friends; and he conceived a deep dislike to every person employed, and every measure concerted for the public service, because he thought all came from the minister or his friends; and indeed, most of the terrible misfortunes that afterwards attended the British arms in America, were owing to his invincible prepossessions *."

An expedition was prepared to intercept the Spanish fleet, which was ready to sail from Ferrol; the command was given to Sir John Norris, and

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Capture of
Porto Bello.

March.

Expeditions
to America.

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 456.

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the duke of Cumberland served on board the *Victory* as a volunteer. The accident of two ships running foul, and the prevalence of contrary winds, frustrated the object of the armament, and they were obliged to remain in Torbay, till intelligence was received that the Spanish fleet had proceeded for America. A small squadron, commanded by commodore Anson, sailed for the South Sea, and to assist Vernon. But the greatest expectation was excited by a formidable fleet of seven and twenty ships of the line, besides frigates, fire ships, bomb ketches, and tenders, equipped for the attack of the northern coast of New Spain, which sailed under Sir Chaloner Ogle. In the West Indies they joined Vernon, who assumed the command, and united to this formidable fleet, his own successful squadron. The troops on board were commanded by lord Cathcart, but he unfortunately died at Dominica, and was succeeded by general Wentworth, between whom and the admiral an implacable animosity subsisted. To this is ascribed the failure of the enterprize, though, undoubtedly, many natural causes of sickness, and bad weather, materially co-operated. The restraint the commanders felt in acting, from their uncertainty with respect to the intentions of the French, who had a strong squadron in those seas under the marquis d'Antin, and who used every artifice and finesse they thought themselves safe in displaying, was also a principal cause of the ill success. Vernon made an attempt on Carthagena, which with all the force he possessed, and the advantage of being restrained by no specific orders, was unsuccessful and inglorious. The captures which were made at sea, far from having a good effect, created animosities between the soldiers and sailors. Sickness raged, and a great mortality prevailed; an unsuccessful attempt on the island of Cuba, completed the chagrin, disappointment, and impatience of the men, and this powerful fleet, the operations of which had fixed the attention of all Europe, and made the friends of Spain despair of her empire in the New World, returned to England without having performed any thing to compensate for the expence of its equipment *.

Not to interrupt the thread of the narrative, I have thus brought down the account of these expeditions, the failure of which drew so much unmerited censure on the administration of Walpole, to a period posterior to the events immediately under consideration.

Divisions in
the cabinet.

Soon after the prorogation of parliament, and the king's departure for Hanover, the division in the cabinet increased to so high a degree, that at one time, the continuance of Walpole and Newcastle in office

* Tindal.

seemed

seemed incompatible; and it appears that Walpole, notwithstanding the approach of a new parliament, had resolved to obtain his dismissal, even in the king's absence. A temporary reconciliation was, however, effected, by the intervention of Horace Walpole, Pelham, and lord Hardwicke, and promises were made on both sides to act with renewed cordiality. But the promises of statesmen are fickle, and soon forgotten. Although a dissolution of the ministry was prevented, yet the same jealousy still subsisted. The most violent and indecorous altercations took place at the meeting of the lords of regency; and after the return of the king, even in the antichamber. Walpole seems occasionally to have lost his usual moderation and good temper, and to have adopted the peevish fretfulness of Newcastle.

It was the object of Newcastle to send all the ships which could be spared to America, for the purpose of ensuring success to the expedition in that quarter. Walpole thought that the affairs of Europe were too *much* sacrificed to those of America, and was apprehensive lest the coast of England should be left exposed. The Grafton, a ship of 70 guns, being disabled from going to the West Indies, it was proposed in the council of regency, to send the Salisbury, a 60 gun ship, in her room. To this the minister objected, and peevishly exclaimed, "What, may not one poor ship be left at home? Must every accident be risked for the West Indies, and no consideration paid to this country?" Newcastle having replied, that the number of Sir Chaloner Ogle's squadron ought not to be diminished, Walpole made a long speech, in the course of which, he exclaimed with great heat, "I oppose nothing, I give into every thing, am said to do every thing, am to answer for every thing, and yet, God knows, I dare not do what I think right. I am of opinion for having more ships of Sir Chaloner Ogle's squadron behind; but I *dare not*, I *will not*, make any alteration;" and when the archbishop of Canterbury proposed that the matter should be taken into consideration another day, he opposed it, and said, "Let them go, let them go*."

But a scene of still more petulant altercation took place soon after the king's return from Hanover. A difference of opinion had prevailed in the cabinet, concerning the mode of applying to the courts of Vienna, Berlin, and Petersburg, in which the sentiments of Walpole had been over-ruled, and he bitterly complained to the king, that the divisions of the cabinet obstructed public business. In the next audience, the king remonstrated with the duke of Newcastle and Harrington; and said, "As to the business in parliament, I do not value the opposition, if all my servants act together, and are united;

* The duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, October 1, 1740. Hardwicke Papers.

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1737 to 1742.

Situation of
foreign af-
fairs.Efforts of
France.

but if they thwart one another, and create difficulties in transacting public business, then indeed it will be another case." Coming out of the closet, the duke met Walpole, and mentioned the disagreeable expressions which he had just heard, insinuating, in reproachful language, that they had been adopted at his suggestion. Walpole denied the imputation, though he acknowledged that he agreed in the sentiment. Newcastle said, "When measures are agreed amongst us, it is very right that every body should support them, but not to have the liberty of giving one's opinion before they are agreed, is very wrong." Walpole indignantly replied, "What do you mean? The war is your's—You have had the conduct of it—I wish you joy of it." The duke denied the fact, and they parted in mutual disgust *.

The situation of continental affairs was not such as to compensate for the miscarriages in America, or to assist in composing the growing feuds in the cabinet.

An apparent harmony and good understanding had continued between the courts of Versailles and St. James's, during the progress of the negotiation which terminated in the peace between the Emperor and the allies. Fleury and Walpole, both anxious to maintain tranquillity, courted each other with affected expressions of good will and amity; and lord Waldegrave, the channel of their mutual intercourse, ably seconded the views of the British minister. The dismissal of Chauvelin, which had been chiefly occasioned or precipitated by the representations of Waldegrave, did not render the French cabinet intrinsically more favourable to England. Amelot, who succeeded him, was of a pliant disposition, and wholly subservient to Fleury. The two nations were as opposite in their political sentiments, as their shores to each other †. During the progress of the disputes with Spain, Fleury affected to act a conciliating part, and tendered his good offices; but when the rupture took place, the French, however inclined to assist Spain, were not, from the decline of their naval force, in a condition to come forward with effect and energy. But when Fleury, deriving fond expectations from the pacific sentiments of Walpole, attempted to intimidate England, by declaring that any conquests in Spanish America should be the signal of immediate hostilities, and would inevitably bring on a general war in Europe, the British cabinet spurned at these menaces, and continued the expeditions to the West Indies. Alarmed at this unexpected firmness, Fleury anxiously proposed the mediation of France, and even offered to secure the payment of the £. 95,000, which the king of Spain had refused to liquidate.

* The duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, October 25, 1742.

† *Littora Littoribus contraria.*

* But

But such was the temper of the English nation, and such the rancour against Spain, that the minister, however well inclined to an accommodation, could not venture to listen to any proposal of peace, and the mediation was declined.

Chapter 54.
1739 to 1748.

The French cabinet foreseeing, that if no compromise was effected, hostilities were inevitable, concluded, in the midst of their amicable overtures to England, a family compact with Spain, laboured in every part of Europe to form alliances, and to isolate England from the continent. They influenced, either in a direct or indirect manner, the wavering and pusillanimous counsels of the Dutch republic, who weakly considered the Spanish war as foreign to their interests as a dispute between Nadir Shah and the Great Mogul. They governed Sweden, and directed the Porte; swayed the Imperial cabinet, and gave an impulse to most of the German princes.

Walpole, aware of these intrigues and efforts, counteracted them by similar exertions. Subsidiary treaties were made with Denmark, and with the king of Sweden, as Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, by which 6,000 Danes and 6,000 Hessians were to be held in readiness to be taken into British pay. Trevor, who had succeeded Horace Walpole at the Hague, strained every nerve to rouse the Dutch from their supineness and apathy. The British minister at St. Petersburg, acquired an ascendancy in the Russian cabinet, and Robinson succeeded in rousing the Emperor to a sense of the disgraceful situation into which he had been plunged by the ascendancy of French counsels, and in stimulating his fears and jealousies at the boundless ambition of the house of Bourbon.

Counter efforts of England.

In the midst of these transactions, the death of Frederick William, king of Prussia, opened a new scene of intrigue and exertion between the two rival courts, and Berlin became the center of negotiations which were to pacify or convulse Europe. Frederick William, who united the discordant qualities of a pacific and military sovereign, and who loved the image, while he dreaded the reality of war, had continued, almost during his whole reign, in a state of wise but calumniated inaction. His son and successor, Frederick the Second, whom poets and historians have styled *the Great*, was a prince of aspiring ambition, and possessed of talents, equally calculated for negotiation or action. He listened with affected complacency to the respective overtures of France and England, without declaring his designs, watching for a favourable opportunity to employ the well organised army, which he inherited from his father, to his own glory and interest.

Death of the king of Prussia:

The time seemed favourable to allay the jealousy which had so long subsisted between the houses of Brunswick and Brandenburg. This had long

been

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1737 to 1742.

Of the Em-
peror.Accession of
Maria The-
resa.Invasion of
Silesia.

been a favourite measure with Walpole, who had in vain endeavoured to reconcile their jarring interests. He now succeeded in overcoming the pertinacity of the king, and in fixing the wavering resolutions of the cabinet. At his instigation, a plan of a grand confederacy against the house of Bourbon, of which the king of Prussia was to be the soul, was formed by Horace Walpole*, approved by the duke of Newcastle, and submitted to the king.

While this measure was in agitation with a fair prospect of success, the death of the Emperor, Charles the Sixth, and of the Czarina, totally changed the system of European politics, and deranged the measures of the British cabinet. In virtue of the pragmatic sanction, Maria Theresa, eldest daughter of the deceased Emperor, instantly succeeded to the whole Austrian inheritance. She was acknowledged by all the powers of Europe, excepting the elector of Bavaria, who alone had refused to guaranty the succession of the female line, and conceived the most sanguine hopes of being able to raise her husband, Francis, great duke of Tuscany, to the Imperial throne, so long possessed by her ancestors. But the calm and sunshine which ushered in the new reign, were soon overclouded. The king of Prussia revived an antiquated claim to part of Silesia, and asserted his pretensions, by leading an army, in the depth of winter, into that duchy. He was favourably received by the protestants, who formed two thirds of the natives, successively occupied Breslaw, the capital, and several other towns, without the smallest resistance, and defeated, at Molvitz, an Austrian army, composed chiefly of veterans, under the command of marshal Neuperg. The British cabinet, knowing the defenceless state of the Austrian dominions, solicited Maria Theresa to purchase the friendship of Frederick, by acceding to his demands, and by sacrificing a small part of her territories to secure the remainder. The queen of Hungary, however, peremptorily rejected all proposals of accommodation, and appealed to Great Britain for the succours stipulated by the treaty which guarantied the pragmatic sanction. The successful irruption of Prussia, brought forward numerous claimants to parts of the Austrian succession. The electors of Bavaria and Saxony, the kings of Spain and Sardinia, all secretly abetted or openly aided by France, evinced a disposition to join Frederick in hostilities against the house of Austria.

* Walpole Papers.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-FIFTH:

1740—1741.

Meeting of Parliament.—Address.—Views of Opposition.—Motion for the Removal of Sir Robert Walpole.—Speech of Sandys.—Conduct of the Tories.—Shippen withdraws.

UNDER these critical circumstances, both at home and abroad, the last session of this parliament assembled. The king, in his speech from the throne, said, "I acquainted you, at the close of the last session of parliament, that I was making preparations for carrying on the just and necessary war in which I am engaged, in the most proper places, and in the most vigorous and effectual manner. For this purpose strong squadrons were got ready, and ordered to sail upon important services, both in the West Indies and Europe, with as much expedition as the nature of those services and the manning of the ships would admit. A very considerable body of land forces was embarked, which is to be joined by a great number of my subjects raised in America; and all things necessary for transporting the troops from hence, and carrying on the designed expedition, were a long time in readiness, and waited only for an opportunity to pursue the intended voyage.

Meeting of
parliament.
Nov. 18,
1740.

"The several incidents which have happened in the mean time have had no effect upon me, but to confirm me in my resolutions, and to determine me to add strength to my armaments, rather than divert or deter me from those just and vigorous methods which I am pursuing, for maintaining the honour of my crown, and the undoubted rights of my people.

"The court of Spain having already felt some effects of our resentment, began to be sensible that they should be no longer able to defend themselves against the efforts of the British nation. And if any other power, agreeably to some late extraordinary proceedings, should interpose, and attempt to prescribe or limit the operations of the war against my declared enemies, the honour and interest of my crown and kingdoms must call upon

Period VII. us to lose no time in putting ourselves into such a condition, as may enable us to repel any insults, and to frustrate any designs formed against us, in violation of the faith of treaties. And I hope any such unprecedented steps, under what colour or pretence soever they may be taken, will inspire my allies with a true sense of the common danger, and will unite us in the support and defence of the common cause.

"The great and unhappy event of the death of the late Emperor, opens a new scene in the affairs of Europe, in which all the principal powers may be immediately or consequentially concerned. It is impossible to determine what turn the policy, interest, or ambition, of the several courts, may lead them to take in this critical conjuncture. It shall be my care strictly to observe and attend to their motions, and to adhere to the engagements I am under, in order to the maintaining of the balance of power, and the liberties of Europe, and in concert with such powers as are under the same obligations, or equally concerned to preserve the public safety and tranquillity, and to act such a part, as may best contribute to avert the imminent dangers that may threaten them *."

Address of
the com-
mons :

He then, in the usual language, demanded the necessary supplies, recommended them to prohibit the exportation of corn, which the great scarcity rendered necessary, and concluded by exhorting them to make provision for removing the difficulties which obstructed the manning of the fleet. In the house of commons, when an address was moved, testifying the gratitude and affection of the house, and their resolution to support the king in the vigorous prosecution of the war; the opposition proposed to insert the words, "to make a due examination into the application of the supplies given the last session of parliament." But the insertion of these words, which were intended to intimate a diffidence of administration, was negatived by 226 against 159, and the original address was carried †.

Of the lords.

The great scene of political altercation during this session was the house of peers, where the duke of Argyle, in particular, made a most conspicuous figure on the side of opposition. The king was no sooner withdrawn, and the speech read by the lord chancellor, than the duke of Argyle suddenly rose, before any of the ministerial peers could make the customary motion, and proposed an address, to assure the king that the house would support him with their lives and fortunes in prosecution of the just and necessary war in which he was engaged. After stating that the ancient mode of drawing up the address was short and general, reprobating the modern cus-

* Journals.

† Ibid.

tom of echoing back the speech from the throne, paragraph by paragraph, and expressing approbation of every measure referred to in the speech; he with great animation, and with no less acrimony, arraigned the mode of conducting the war, in which he declared that no one right step had been taken either in the commencement or prosecution. He particularly blamed the miscarriage of the expedition against Ferrol, and even insinuated that secret orders had been given by ministers against making any attempt on the coast of Spain, and that the sailing of the grand fleet, which had been delayed, was the effect of the king's presence. He mentioned the culpable neglect, and more than neglect, in not sending supplies to admiral Vernon. He severely reprobated the speech, which he considered as the speech of the minister, for not naming the power who might attempt to limit or prescribe the operations of the war. He concluded by proposing to revive the ancient method of addressing, simply to "congratulate his majesty on his safe return to his regal dominions: To assure his majesty that they would stand by him with their lives and fortunes, in the prosecution of the war; and as a further proof of their duty and affection to his majesty's sacred person, royal family, and government, to declare that they would exert themselves in their high capacity of hereditary great council of the crown, (to which all other councils were subordinate and accountable) in such manner as might best tend to promote the true interest of his majesty and the country in the present juncture." Lord Bathurst seconded the motion.

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1740 to 1741.

This address was opposed by lord Haversham, who moved another. The previous question being called for by the duke of Newcastle, the duke of Argyle's motion was negatived by 66 against 38; and an address, according to the ordinary form, proposed by lord Haversham, passed on the motion without a division; but a violent protest was signed by two and twenty peers*.

The great aim of opposition in this memorable session was to increase the unpopularity of the minister by pressing his misconduct in the prosecution of the war, by imputing all the miscarriages and ill success to him, to harass him with repeated motions and questions relative to the production of papers and letters, and to the prosecution of the war, which might tend either to criminate him if granted, and if denied, to throw an odium on his mysteriousness and uncandid reserve. In the house of lords, in particular, various letters and copies of instructions were moved for, and refused only by small majorities; others were carried which ought to have been denied, owing to the feeble resistance of some members of the cabinet.

Views of
opposition.

* Lords' Debates, vol. 7. p. 418.

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At this period the opposition were disunited amongst themselves, and could not be brought to form a consistent party, moving regularly towards one great object, but thinking themselves secure of success, began already to quarrel about the spoils. The Tories jealous of the Whigs, complained, that though far inferior in number, they assumed a consequence and superiority to which they were not entitled. They suspected that several of them had already begun to tamper with the party in the cabinet which was known to be adverse to the minister. The death of Sir William Wyndham dissolved the ties which had kept the Tories in union with the Whigs, and enfeebled both parties by a want of mutual confidence. From these causes the debates in the house of commons were not conducted with their usual energy. But as the peers in opposition were more closely united, and less distracted with jealousies, their efforts were more vigorous and concentrated, and their motions led to the personal attack on the minister, which distinguished this memorable session. To prepare the public mind, they entered into long and frequent protests, which during the interruption given to the publication of debates, conveyed their sentiments unanswered to the world.

Notice of
motion.

Their motions and publications formed a prelude to the grand attack. On the 11th of February, Sandys, who is justly called by Smollet "the motion-maker," left his seat, and crossing the floor to the minister, said, that he thought it an act of common attention to inform him, that he should on Friday next, bring an accusation of several articles against him. Walpole thanked him for the information. Soon afterwards Sandys stood in his place, and acquainted the house, that he intended on the ensuing Friday to open a matter of great importance, which personally concerned the chancellor of the exchequer, and therefore hoped that he would on that day be present.

The minister immediately rose, and received the intimation with great composure and dignity, thanked him for his notice, and after requesting a candid and impartial hearing, declared, that he would not fail to attend the house, as he was not conscious of any crime to deserve accusation. He laid his hand on his breast and said, with some emotion,

"Nil conscire sibi, nulli pallescere culpæ."

Pulteney observed, that the right honourable gentleman's logic and Latin were equally inaccurate, and declared that he had misquoted Horace, who had written *nulla pallescere culpa*. The minister defended his quotation, and Pulteney repeating his assertion, he offered a wager of a guinea; Pulteney accepted

cepted the challenge, and referred the decision of the dispute to the minister's friend Nicholas Hardinge, clerk of the house, a man distinguished for classical erudition. Hardinge decided against Walpole, the guinea was immediately thrown to Pulteney, who caught it, and holding it up to the house, exclaimed, "It is the only money which I have received from the treasury for many years, and it shall be the last*."

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The public expectations were raised to the utmost pitch, the passages to the gallery were crowded at a very early hour, the concourse was prodigious. Several of the commons secured their seats at six in the morning, and no less than 450 members attended on this important occasion. The debate was opened at one o'clock.

Feb. 13.

Sandys † began by observing, that among the many advantages arising from our happy constitution, there was one reciprocal to the king and people: The legal and regular method by which the people might lay their grievances, complaints, and opinions, before their sovereign, not only with regard to the measures which he pursues, but also with regard to the persons whom he employs.

Speech of
Sandys.

"In absolute monarchies," he said, "the people may suffer, but cannot publicly complain; and this want of communication is productive of the most dreadful calamities both to the prince and people. For as the monarch has no means of becoming acquainted with the public opinion, he often continues to pursue the same measures, and to employ the same men, until the discontents become universal; a general insurrection takes place, and both he and his ministers are involved in one common ruin. In this kingdom such a misfortune can never happen, as long as parliaments assemble regularly and freely. For if discontents arise, when any of the measures pursued by the king's servants are injurious, and his ministers unpopular, it is the duty of this house to give proper information and advice, and if we neglect to do so we betray not only our duty to our country and constitution, but our duty to our sovereign. This being my opinion, and the opinion of every person who entertains true notions of our constitution, I can no longer defer making the motion of which I formerly gave notice.

"There is not a member of this house who is not sensible that both our

* Anecdote communicated by George Hardinge, esq; son of Nicholas Hardinge.—Account by Sir Robert Walpole.—Etough's Papers.—Correspondence.—Tindal, vol. 20, p. 486.—Chandler, 1740-1, p. 63. This guinea was carefully preserved by Mr. Pul-

teney, and is now in the possession of Sir William Pulteney, bart. by whose representation

† The substance of this speech is taken from an abstract made by Mr. Fox.—Correspondence.—From parliamentary Memorandums by Sir Robert Walpole.—Orford Papers.—Chandler.

it was deposited in the Brit. Museum 1820.

foreign

Period VII. 1737 to 1742. foreign and domestic affairs, for several years past, have been unsatisfactory to the majority of the nation. The people have suffered from past measures; they complain of present measures; they expect no redress, no alteration or amendment but from the interference of this house. These are the sentiments of the people; which ought to be represented to the king, in the proper method established by the constitution.

"I have long expected, that such a motion as I am now to make would have been brought forward by some other gentleman more capable than myself to enforce what I shall propose; but as no one has hitherto attempted it, and as this is the last session of this parliament, I am unwilling it should expire without answering the people's expectations, which, in this respect, are so just, so well founded, and so agreeable to the constitution. I therefore hope I shall be excused for attempting what I think my duty as a member of this house, and as a friend to the present happy establishment."

He then lamented the miserable condition of the nation; engaged in a war with one potentate, and likely to be involved in another, without one ally abroad, and under the pressure of an immense debt at home. He said that he would inquire by what means we were reduced to this situation, and would then make his intended motion.

Heads of accusation.

In making ~~the~~ inquiry into the causes of our unfortunate condition, he should first begin by considering foreign affairs, then advert to domestic affairs, and lastly enter into the conduct of the war.

On foreign affairs.

In regard to foreign affairs, we had departed from the principles of the grand alliance which tended to depress our inveterate enemy the house of Bourbon, and had abandoned and lost our old and natural ally the house of Austria.

Although it had been frequently asserted, that all the misfortunes of our foreign negotiations were principally owing to the peace of Utrecht; yet he was of another opinion. The evils of the treaty of Utrecht had been repaired by the quadruple alliance, and still more by the glorious victory which admiral Byng had gained over the Spanish fleet, off the coast of Sicily; a victory, however, which served no other purpose than to give rise to the scandalous treaty of peace in 1721, a treaty highly dishonourable to the nation, because it agreed to restore the ships we had taken in an open and just war, and began with a negotiation, if not an engagement, to give up Gibraltar and Minorca, without stipulating any conditions for the advantage of this country, or obtaining an explanation of those treaties, which even then began to be misrepresented on the part of Spain. In one word, this treaty re-established the preponderance of the house of Bourbon.

But he could declare, from the highest authority, that we had even since that time been, with respect to foreign powers, in a most desirable situation. The high authority to which he alluded was the speech from the throne, in November 1724, which represented peace with all powers abroad; at home perfect tranquillity, plenty, and an uninterrupted enjoyment of all civil and religious rights; expressions which charmed every English ear. But that universal happiness did not long continue. For soon after this period we entered into "that close friendship and correspondence with the court of France, which, to the infinite disadvantage of this nation, has continued ever since, and which has now, at last, brought the balance of power into the utmost danger, if not to inevitable ruin." We declined availing ourselves of the fortunate breach which had taken place between the two branches of the house of Bourbon, we declined taking advantage of the resentment entertained by Philip against France, for the return of the Spanish infant, we declined the offer of the king of Spain to submit to the sole mediation of England to settle the disputes between him and the Emperor.

"But the most pernicious of all the pernicious measures was the treaty of Hanover. When the alliance between Spain and the Emperor was concluded, we, who by a very little dexterity, might then have duped France, who has duped us so often, instead of doing so, by the treaty of Hanover, flung ourselves into her arms, and England's affairs seem, ever since, to have been managed by a French interest. Fleets had been sent, one to the Baltic, another to the West Indies, to insult, and only to insult, the Czar and the king of Spain; the three pretended articles of the Vienna treaty, which produced that of Hanover, were the establishment of the Ostend company, the taking of Gibraltar, and the placing of the Pretender on the throne. But when Gibraltar was besieged, what assistance did we receive from France?" He was inclined to believe that no help was so much as demanded of the French, because we knew none would be granted: The reparation of Dunkirk was a memorable instance of French sincerity.

He then adverted to the preliminaries of the peace of 1727, and the act of the Pardo. He stated, that on the first complaints from the merchants, of Spanish depredations, the parliament thought fit to recommend pacific measures only. He then censured the treaty of Seville, by which Spanish troops were to be introduced into Italy. Don Carlos went thither, but we gained nothing; commissioners only were appointed, and when the parliament, in 1732, addressed to know what progress they had made, his majesty's answer was, that they were to meet in four months; but by the delays of Spain, the conferences were not opened till 1734, a strong proof of Spanish.

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Spanish perfidy; yet we had introduced the Spanish troops, according to our treaty with the Emperor and States General in 1731. We then guarantied the pragmatic sanction, and engaged to support the Emperor in all his dominions, but saw him lose Sicily and Naples, suffered France to gain Loraine, and the power of the house of Austria, which had been ridiculously magnified in order to vindicate the Hanoverian treaty, pulled down and brought to its present low and miserable situation.

"That great man, admiral Vernon, saw this error, and gave frequent admonitions against the perfidy of France, in this very house, for which reason it was contrived, that he should be excluded from the next parliament, and he was likewise denied his rank. Then came the second complaint of depredations, when, by the management of one person, parliament was prevailed upon to be again pacific."

He then expatiated on the convention: He repeated most of the objections made to that treaty, which he called one of those expedients on which the minister seemed to live from year to year, and when this treaty was shamefully broken by Spain, war was not declared, but an order issued at first for reprisals only. Negotiations, as he believed, still went on, but soon after followed the present war.

On domestic
affairs.

He then adverted to domestic affairs; after stating the national debt in 1716, he alledged that the debts of the army had been swelled from £.400,000 to above two millions, and debentures issued for that sum, of which part had been discharged from the produce of the sinking fund, by which one person had gained considerable advantage.

To make and unmake, he urged, the famous bank contract, to secure from condign punishment those, who by their wicked and avaricious execution of the trust reposed in them by the South Sea scheme, had ruined many thousands; to commute public justice, and subject the less guilty to a punishment too severe, in order that the most heinous offenders might escape that which they deserved; and to give up to the South Sea company the sum of seven millions sterling, which they had obliged themselves to pay to the public, a great part of which sum was given to old stock holders, and consequently to those who had never suffered by the scheme; were the steps by which dishonest power was obtained. All the evils and none of the advantages of the French Mississippi scheme were adopted: Our South Sea scheme had *done us harm*, while their's had liquidated their debts.

He then enumerated the debts and the produce of the sinking fund in 1727, and asserted, that the national debt was not diminished, although the
sinking

sinking fund had since that period produced no less than fifteen millions, all which had been spent in Spithead expeditions, and Hyde Park reviews.

He next enumerated many instances of unconstitutional conduct. A larger standing army maintained than was necessary or consistent with the constitution; augmented without cause. Squadrons fitted out at an enormous expence, to the great annoyance of trade, without being employed against enemies, or for the assistance of allies. All methods to secure the constitution against that most dangerous enemy, corruption, rejected or rendered ineffectual; many penal laws passed of an arbitrary tendency; public expenditure increased by the addition of new and useless offices; all inquiries into the management of public money perverted or defeated; votes of credit frequent; expences of the civil list increased; the abolition of burthenome and pernicious taxes, and the discharge of the debt prevented, from a principle that the collection of taxes rendered a great number of placemen and officers necessary, whose votes gave weight to undue influence in elections and in parliament; the reduction of interest opposed, not by the influence of argument, but by another sort of influence; officers dismissed for voting against the excise scheme, one of the weakest or most violent projects ever set on foot or countenanced by any minister. These, he observed, were the characteristic features of a corrupt and profligate administration.

He then entered on the conduct of the war. Vernon, who after having been excluded from his seat in parliament, and deprived of his rank, for opposing administration, had retired to the country, was the only person fit or willing to conduct the expedition to America; and yet even with these claims, he was not restored to his rank; though it was to be hoped that his meritorious services would extort that mark of confidence. Vernon received on his departure the fairest promises of being supported and supplied. How were these promises fulfilled? He sailed from Plymouth on the 3d of August 1739, only with letters of reprisal, war not being declared till October, by which means his exertions were fettered and restrained. He sailed with a fleet badly equipped, and badly supplied. In September, some bomb vessels were sent to him, which did not arrive at Jamaica till the 15th of January. No provisions or stores were forwarded, and so scantily was he victualled, that on the 18th of March, he wrote to government, earnestly pressing for more supplies. He said, that his letters on the table sufficiently prove these facts; they displayed his opinion of the great things which he might have effected, had the number of land forces, which he earnestly and repeatedly called for, been granted, forces which remained at home for no other use but to oppress the people; forces which should not have been raised, or should have been sent out to vindicate

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On the conduct of the war.

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the honour of their country against their oppressors in America, where alone offensive measures could be carried on with effect. Admiral Haddock, he urged, was equally neglected; bitter complaints of want of supplies came no less from his squadron, and he was forced to act upon the defensive. To that want, he solely attributed the escape of the Cadiz and Ferrol squadrons. He commended, in high terms, the care and diligence of admiral Haddock, in furnishing convoys, and protecting the trade of the Mediterranean, and animadverted with equal acrimony on the culpable neglect of convoys at home, and the numerous cruisers of the enemy, which infested the Channel, and ruined our commerce.

Things being thus, he should now name the author of all these public calamities. After what he had said, he believed no one could mistake the person to whom he alluded: every one must be convinced that he meant the right honourable gentleman who sat opposite to him, and the whole house might see that the right honourable gentleman took it to himself; that against him there was as general a discontent as had ever arisen against any minister. Although this discontent had lasted so long, yet the right honourable gentleman still continued in his post, in opposition to the sense of the country; this was no sign of the freedom of government, because a free people neither will nor can be governed by a minister whom they hate or despise.

He had well considered the difficulty of personal attacks, yet he should obey the voice of the people, and act like an honest man, and like an Englishman, in making his motion. He himself, merely a private man, protected only by his innocence, would fearlessly enter the lists against one who usurped a regal power, who had arrogated to himself a place of French extraction, that of sole minister; contrary to the nature and principles of the English constitution. He was well aware, that a common excuse would be urged in his defence, that parliament had given a sanction to many of the acts which he had enumerated. But the right honourable gentleman could not urge this exculpation, without subjecting himself to the charge of gross inconsistency. He himself had accused the earl of Oxford of departing from the principles of the grand alliance, and of having sacrificed the country to France, although all his measures had been sanctioned by parliament. He observed likewise, that parliaments were not infallible, but resembled other courts of justice. They judge from information, and if convinced that they had been misled by false information, should equally acknowledge their error, and alter their opinions.

"If it should be asked," he said, "Why I impute all these evils to one person,

person, I reply, because that one person grasped in his own hands every branch of government; that *one person* has attained the sole direction of affairs, monopolised all the favours of the crown, compassed the disposal of all places, pensions, titles, ribbands, as well as all preferments, civil, military, and ecclesiastical; that *one person* made a blind submission to his will, both in elections and parliament, the only terms of present favour, and future expectation, and continuance in office; and declared, in this very house, that he must be a pitiful minister who did not displace an officer that opposed his measures in parliament.

“ But even let us suppose no oversight, error, or crime in his public conduct, and that the people were satisfied with his administration, the very length of it is in itself a sufficient cause for removing him. In a free government too long possession of power is highly dangerous. Most commonwealths have been overturned by this very oversight; and in this country, we know how difficult it has often proved for parliament to draw an old favourite from behind the throne, even when he has been guilty of the most heinous crimes. I wish this may not be our case at present; for though I will not say, nor have I at present any occasion for shewing, that the favourite I am now complaining of has been guilty of any crimes, the proof may then be come at, and the witnesses against him will not be afraid to appear. Till you do this, it is impossible to determine, whether he is guilty or innocent; and considering the universal clamour against him, it is high time to reduce him to such a condition, that he may be brought to a fair, an impartial, and a strict account. As I am only to propose an address to remove him from the king's counsels, I have no occasion to accuse him of any specific crime. The dissatisfaction of the people, and their suspicion of his conduct, are a sufficient foundation for such an address, and a sufficient cause for his removal. For no sovereign of these kingdoms ought to employ any minister who is disagreeable to the people, and when any minister is become unpopular, it is our duty to inform the king, that he may give general satisfaction by his removal. I solemnly declare, that I have, no resentment against the right honourable gentleman; I have, on the contrary, received personal civilities from him, and have no private motives to wish him ill. But as I think it necessary, for the welfare of my country, that he should no longer continue in his majesty's counsels, who has bewildered himself in treaties, who has forfeited his word with every court in Europe, and against whom the voice of the world, is in unison with that of his country, I therefore move, That an humble address be presented to his majesty, that he

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would be graciously pleased to remove the right honourable Sir Robert Walpole, knight of the most noble order of the garter, first commissioner, chancellor, and under treasurer of the exchequer, and one of his majesty's most honourable privy council, from his majesty's presence and counsels for ever."

Seconded by
lord Limerick.

The motion was seconded by lord Limerick, who observed, that the nation was reduced to so low a state by the misconduct of the minister, that no resource was left, excepting the increase of the land tax, and the anticipation of the funds. That the reins of government were conducted by a sole minister, who lived by expedients, who had removed the best and ablest men in the army, for no other demerit than for their parliamentary opposition to his measures.

Motion for
Walpole to
withdraw.

Wortley Montague then proposed, in conformity to the order of the house, which requires that every member, against whom an accusation is brought, should retire while his conduct is examined, that Sir Robert Walpole should be ordered to withdraw. He was seconded by Gybbon, who attempted to vindicate this unjust proposal, by several inapplicable precedents.

Opposed.

The motion was warmly opposed by Bromley and Howe; and as the house appeared to favour that side of the question, Gybbon, after urging, that if the motion for the removal should be carried, neither the life, liberty, or estate of the minister would be affected by the decision, proposed that he should be first heard in his own defence, and then withdraw. This proposal was strenuously supported, and no less strenuously resisted; it was called an unprecedented mode of proceeding, to charge a member in general terms, by speeches only, without stating particular facts as crimes, or bringing any evidence to prove them, or him to be the author of them; and then to expect that he should retire, and other members be permitted to load him with general accusations, while he was not present to hear and make his defence. The house appearing convinced of the absurdity and injustice of this proposal, it was withdrawn, and resolved that the minister should hear all the charges brought against him, and should be the last to reply.

Debate on
the question.

A long and violent debate then took place on the main question. The principal speakers in favour of the motion were Pulteney, Bootle, Fazakerly, Pitt, and Lyttleton.

The substance of their arguments was similar to those which had been advanced by Sandys; no direct accusation was made, no specific charge urged, no particular crime alledged, but a species of accumulative guilt, drawn from a long series of supposed misconduct, and founded on, what they called,

called, moral certainty, presumptive evidence, probable proof, common fame, and notoriety of facts.

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They justified their proceedings by making a distinction between impeachments, or bills of pains and penalties, which affect the lives, liberty, or estates of the persons accused, and an address to remove a minister only, without attempting to inflict any legislative or judicial punishment. In the first case, they observed, legal evidence is necessary, and must be applied to the several heads of the accusation, but in the other strong presumptions, founded upon public fame and notoriety, have been always held sufficient.

Pitt observed, in his emphatic language, "That during the administration that was the object of censure, at home debts were increased and taxes multiplied, and the sinking fund alienated; abroad the system of Europe was totally subverted, and at this awful moment, when the greatest scene was opening to Europe that has ever before occurred, he who had lost the confidence of all mankind, should not be permitted to continue at the head of the king's government *.

Pitt.

Pulteney enforced the general tenour of the argument advanced by Sandys, with increased animation, wit, and eloquence. He particularly dwelt on his favourite topic, that the system adopted and invariably pursued by the minister, tended to exalt the house of Bourbon, and depress that of Austria; and maintained his position by an analysis of foreign transactions and treaties, that preceded and followed the treaty of Hanover, which he considered as the source of all subsequent degradations, and the cause of national disgrace.

Pulteney.

References were not only made to those ministers who had been impeached or censured by the house of commons, to Suffolk, Clarendon, and Lauderdale, but Walpole was compared to the most worthless favourites that had ever engrossed the ear of former sovereigns. Allusions were even made to the minions of Edward the Second, Pierce Gaveston †, and Hugh Le

* Heads of Pitt's speech, in Sir Robert Walpole's Parliamentary Memorandums.

† About this time was published, "The Life and Death of Pierce Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, grand Favourite and Prime Minister to that unfortunate Prince, Edward the Second, King of England, with Political Remarks, by Way of Caution to all crowned Heads, and Evil Ministers." It was accompanied with a caricature print, representing the figure of Sir Robert Walpole, holding in his hands a label, inscribed *Corruption*. Before him is the block,

and the executioner with the axe. Behind him is a grenadier with a bag of money in his hand, on which is written *pay*; a hand in the clouds holds a sword over his head. Underneath is a vignette, with a baboon in chains on one side, and on the other a hydra pierced with darts, inclosing this inscription:

"Tho' evil ministers awhile,
"May bask themselves in fortune's smile;
"They for their crimes must soon or late,
"Like Gaveston, submit to fate."

Despenser,

Period VII. Despenfer, and he was accused of resembling them in the giddiness of their
1737 to 1742. power, and the exorbitance of their grants.

Pelham and
Fox.

The motion was opposed, with great animation and ability, by the friends of the minister. Pelham and Stephen Fox principally distinguished themselves in this debate; after vindicating the measures, both foreign and domestic, which had been so much arraigned, they rested the chief part of the defence on the impropriety of the motion. They exposed the violence and injustice of proposing to have a member of the house, and a person in his high station, punished by the loss of character and reputation, upon general allegations, which were not proved to be crimes, and which had received, in former examinations and debates, the approbation or consent of the parliament, and in making Sir Robert Walpole an adviser of the things alledged, as prime or sole minister, without any other evidence than that of common fame*.

Sir Charles
Wager.

The assertion of Sir Charles Wager made a great impression on the house. With a view to combat the arguments that Walpole was sole minister, the veteran seaman, who had been at the head of the admiralty nine years, said, "That, to his knowledge, Sir Robert Walpole was as forward and zealous to promote the war as any of his majesty's council, and that nothing was a moment wanted in his province, that of issuing money: That he had never interfered in recommending any one person to the admiralty board; and that if he had ever done so, he (Sir Charles) would have thrown up all his employments."

Conduct of
the Tories.

The minister was not only defended by his friends, and those who usually supported the measures of government, but the motion was opposed by several Tories, as tending to introduce an inquisitorial system.

Lord Corn-
bury.

Lord Cornbury, in particular, observed, "The advocates for the motion, endeavour to advance a charge of *accumulative* guilt, to aggravate one crime by the superaddition of another, and rather to intend a popular censure than a legal condemnation.

"I suppose no man will suspect that an unjust partiality in favour of the gentleman, whose conduct is now the subject of examination, influences me to censure this mode of proceeding, since no man can want reasons against it of the greatest weight. Reasons which deserve the closest attention from every man of prudence and virtue; every man who regards his own safety, or the happiness of future generations. No man, whose judgment is not overborne by his resentment, and whose ardour for vengeance has not extinguished every other motive of action, can resolve to give the sanction of his voice

* Account of the debate by Sir Robert Walpole. Correspondence.

to a method of prosecution, by which the good and bad are equally endangered; and which will make the administration of public affairs destructive to the purest integrity, and the highest wisdom.

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"That such must be the consequence of charges like this, will appear no longer a paradoxical assertion, if it be remembered, that humanity is a state of imperfection, that the strictest virtue sometimes declines from the right, and that the most consummate policy is by false appearances, or accidental inattention, betrayed into error. For how soon must that man be destroyed, whose high station exposes him to the continual observation of envy and malevolence, whose minutest errors are carefully remarked, and whose casual failings are treasured up as a fund of accusations. How soon, if trivial transgressions shall be accumulated into capital crimes, may the best man complete the sum of his offences, and be doomed to ignominy, to exile, or to death?

"In criminal proceedings, particular regard has been had to precedents, and surely the effects of a former accusation of this kind, give us no encouragement to the repetition of it. From a charge of accumulative treason, the faction of the last age proceeded to the usurpation of boundless authority, the subversion of our constitution, and the murder of the king.

"I shall therefore continue to suppose every man innocent till he appears from legal evidence to be guilty; and to reject any charge of accumulative guilt, upon the same principles of regard to liberty, to virtue, to truth, and to our constitution, by which I have hitherto regulated my conduct; and for the same reasons for which I have condemned the measures of the administration, I shall now oppose the present motion *."

Edward Harley, member for Herefordshire, brother to the lord treasurer, and in a short time afterwards earl of Oxford himself, evinced, on this occasion, a spirit of moderation, not usual with persons engaged in party disputes. He was one of the heads of the Tory interest, and his family had always distinguished itself in opposition to Sir Robert Walpole. He said, "Sir, I do not stand up at this time of night, either to accuse or flatter any man. Since I have had the honour to sit in parliament, I have opposed the measures of administration because I thought them wrong; and as long as they are, I shall continue to give as constant an opposition to them. The state of the nation, by the conduct of our ministers, is deplorable; a war is destroying us abroad, and poverty and corruption are devouring us at home. But whatever I may think of men, God forbid, that my private opinion should be

Harley.

* Chandler.

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the only rule of my judgment ! I should desire to have an exterior conviction from facts and evidences, and without this, I am so far from condemning, that I would not censure any man. I am fully satisfied in my own mind, that there are those who give pernicious and destructive counsels ; and, I hope, a time will come, when a proper, legal, parliamentary inquiry may be made, and when clear facts and full evidence will plainly discover who are the enemies of their country. A noble lord, to whom I had the honour to be related, has been often mentioned in this debate : He was impeached and imprisoned ; by that imprisonment his years were shortened ; and the prosecution was carried on by the honourable person, who is now the subject of your question, though he knew at that very time, that there was no evidence to support it. I am now, Sir, glad of this opportunity to return good for evil, and to do that honourable gentleman and his family, that justice which he denied to mine*."

Shippen
withdraws.

Shippen declared, "† that he looked on this motion as only a scheme for turning out one minister, and bringing in another ; that as his conduct in parliament had always been regulated with a view to the good of his country, without any regard to his own private interest, it was quite indifferent to him, who was in or who was out ; and he would give himself no concern in the question." At the conclusion of these words he withdrew, and was followed by thirty-four of his friends.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-SIXTH:

1742.

*Reply of Sir Robert Walpole.—Motion negatived.—Similar Motion in the Lords.
—Conduct and Anecdotes of Shippen.*

THIS attack, concerted with so much previous care, and announced with so much ostentation, was not calculated to alarm the minister. He saw the disaffected Whigs feeble and hesitating ; all the Tories, not ex-

* Chandler.—Tindal has recorded this speech, as spoken in the house of lords by the earl of Oxford, which was certainly spoken by his uncle in the house of commons. By the

death of his nephew, in the following June, he succeeded to the title.
† Chandler.

cluding

cluding those who voted against him, averse to the question; many supporting him with a favourable display of impartial and benevolent principles; the Jacobites scornfully turning their backs upon a party apparently united by no principle, and a motion brought forwards without due consideration. He availed himself, with great ability, of the vantage ground on which he stood, and commenced the reply by a well conducted attack against the discordant parts of opposition. He fomented the division between the Tories and Whigs in opposition, paid a delicate compliment to the Tories, and directed the shafts of his eloquence principally against the leaders of the disaffected Whigs, whose motives of hostility were already suspected by the public.

He said, "Sir *, it has been observed by several gentlemen, in vindication of this motion, that if it should be carried, neither my life, liberty, or estate will be affected. But do the honourable gentlemen consider my character and reputation as of no moment? Is it no imputation to be arraigned before this house, in which I have sat forty years, and to have my name transmitted to posterity with disgrace and infamy? I will not conceal my sentiments, that to be named in parliament as a subject of inquiry, is to me a matter of great concern; but I have the satisfaction at the same time to reflect, that the impression to be made depends upon the consistency of the charge, and the motives of the prosecutors. Had the charge been reduced to specific allegations, I should have felt myself called upon for a specific defence. Had I served a weak or wicked master, and implicitly obeyed his dictates, obedience to his commands must have been my only justification. But as it has been my good fortune to serve a master, who wants no bad ministers, and would have hearkened to none, my defence must rest on my own conduct. The consciousness of innocence is also sufficient support against my present prosecutors. A farther justification is also derived from a consideration of the views and abilities of the prosecutors. Had I been guilty of great enormities, they want neither zeal and inclination to bring them forwards, nor ability to place them in the most prominent point of view. But as I am conscious of no crime, my own experience convinces me, that none can be justly imputed. I must therefore ask the gentlemen, from whence does this attack proceed? From the passions and prejudices of the parties combined against me; who may be divided into three classes, the Boys, the riper Patriots, and the Tories. The Tories I can easily forgive,

Speech of Sir
Robert Wal-
pole.

* The substance of this speech is taken from Sir Robert Walpole.—Orford Papers.—Chandler. parliamentary minutes, in the hand writing of

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they have unwillingly come into the measure, and they do me honour in thinking it necessary to remove me, as their only obstacle. What is the inference to be drawn from these premises? that demerit with them ought to be considered as merit with others. But my great and principal crime is my long continuance in office, or, in other words, the long exclusion of those who now complain against me. This is the heinous offence which exceeds all others: I keep from them the possession of that power, those honours and those emoluments, to which they so ardently and pertinaciously aspire. I will not attempt to deny the reasonableness and necessity of a party war; but in carrying on that war, all principles and rules of justice should not be departed from. The Tories must confess, that the most obnoxious persons have felt few instances of extra judicial power. Wherever they have been arraigned, a plain charge has been exhibited against them; they have had an impartial trial, and have been permitted to make their defence; and will they, who have experienced this fair and equitable mode of proceeding, act in direct opposition to every principle of justice, and establish this fatal precedent of parliamentary inquisition? and whom would they conciliate by a conduct so contrary to principle and precedent?

“Can it be fitting in them, who have divided the public opinion of the nation, to share it with those who now appear as their competitors? With the men of yesterday, the boys in politics, who would be absolutely contemptible did not their audacity render them detestable? With the mock patriots, whose practice and professions prove their selfishness and malignity, who threatened to pursue me to destruction, and who have never for a moment lost sight of their object? These men, under the name of the Separatists, presume to call themselves, exclusively, the *nation* and the *people*, and under that character, assume all power. In their estimation, the king, lords, and commons are a faction, and *they* are the government. Upon these principles, they threaten the destruction of all authority, and think they have a right to judge, direct, and resist, all legal magistrates. They withdraw from parliament because they succeed in nothing, and then attribute their want of success not to its true cause, their own want of integrity and importance, but to the effect of places, pensions, and corruption. May it not be asked, Are the people on the court side more united than on the other? Are not the Tories, Jacobites, and *Patriots* equally determined? What makes this strict union? What cements this heterogeneous mass? Party engagements and personal attachments. However different their views and principles, they all agree in opposition. The Jacobites distress the government they would subvert; the Tories contend for

for party prevalence and power. The Patriots, from discontent and disappointment, would change the ministry, that themselves might exclusively succeed. They have laboured this point twenty years unsuccessfully; they are impatient of longer delay. They clamour for change of measures, but mean only change of ministers.

"In party contests, why should not both sides be equally steady? Does not a Whig administration as well deserve the support of the Whigs as the contrary? Why is not principle the cement in one as well as the other, especially when they confess, that all is levelled against one man? Why this one man? because they think, vainly, nobody else could withstand them. All others are treated as tools and vassals. The one is the corrupter, the numbers corrupted. But whence this cry of corruption, and exclusive claim of honourable distinction? Compare the estates, characters, and fortunes of the commons on one side, with those on the other. Let the matter be fairly investigated; survey and examine the individuals who usually support the measures of government, and those who are in opposition. Let us see to whose side the balance preponderates. Look round both houses, and see to which side the balance of virtue and talents preponderates! Are all these on one side, and not on the other? Or are all these to be counterbalanced by an affected claim to the exclusive title of patriotism. Gentlemen have talked a great deal of patriotism. A venerable word, when duly practised. But I am sorry to say, that of late it has been so much hackneyed about, that it is in danger of falling into disgrace: the very idea of true patriotism is lost, and the term has been prostituted to the very worst of purposes. A patriot, Sir! why patriots spring up like mushrooms? I could raise fifty of them within the four-and-twenty hours. I have raised many of them in one night. It is but refusing to gratify an unreasonable or an insolent demand, and up starts a patriot. I have never been afraid of making patriots; but I disdain and despise all their efforts. But this pretended virtue proceeds from personal malice, and from disappointed ambition. There is not a man amongst them whose particular aim I am not able to ascertain, and from what motives they have entered into the lists of opposition.

"I shall now consider the articles of accusation which they have brought against me, and which they have not thought fit to reduce to specific charges; and I shall consider these in the same order as that in which they were placed by the honourable member who made the motion. First, in regard to foreign affairs, secondly, to domestic affairs, and, thirdly, to the conduct of the war.

"As to foreign affairs, I must take notice of the uncandid manner in

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which

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which the gentlemen on the other side have managed the question, by blending numerous treaties and complicated negotiations into one general mass.

"To form a fair and candid judgment of the subject, it becomes necessary not to consider the treaties merely insulated; but to advert to the time in which they were made, to the circumstances and situation of Europe when they were made, to the peculiar situation in which I stand, and to the power which I possessed. I am called repeatedly and insidiously prime and sole minister. Admitting, however, for the sake of argument, that I am prime and sole minister in this country; am I, therefore, prime and sole minister of all Europe? Am I answerable for the conduct of other countries as well as for that of my own? Many words are not wanting to shew, that the particular views of each court occasioned the dangers which affected the public tranquillity; yet the whole is charged to my account. Nor is this sufficient; whatever was the conduct of England, I am equally arraigned. If we maintained ourselves in peace, and took no share in foreign transactions, we are reproached for tameness and pusillanimity. If, on the contrary, we interfered in the disputes, we are called Don Quixotes, and dupes to all the world. If we contracted guaranties, it was asked, why is the nation wantonly burthened? If guaranties were declined, we were reproached with having no allies."

After making these preliminary observations, on the necessity of considering the relative situation of Europe, when these engagements were contracted, and proving that the treaties were right at the time they were made, though they might not have had the desired effect, he entered into a luminous recapitulation of the principal compacts, which had been adverted to in the course of the debate. They formed a connective series, embracing past events, present advantages, and future contingencies, of which the various parts had such a necessary dependance on each other, that any separation must be fatal to the comprehension of the whole.

He took up the subject from the peace of Utrecht, which, by suffering a prince of the house of Bourbon to remain on the throne of Spain, had materially altered the balance of power in Europe, had produced new interests, and involved this country in a series of delicate and complicated negotiations. The quadruple alliance was the consequence of that treaty; but as he was not then in administration, he was not accountable either for its articles or effects, though he was unfortunately minister, and unwillingly accessory to the execution of it.

He should, therefore, begin with the first act of that administration to which he had the honour to belong; a refusal to accept of the sole mediation

mediation offered by Spain, on the breach between Spain and France, occasioned by the dismissal of the infanta. "I hope it will not be said," he observed, "we had any reason to quarrel with France upon that account; and therefore, if our accepting of that mediation might have produced a rupture with France, it was not our duty to interfere, unless we had something very beneficial to expect from the acceptance. A reconciliation between the courts of Vienna and Madrid, it is true, was desirable to all Europe, as well as to us, provided it had been brought about without any design to disturb our tranquillity, or the tranquillity of Europe; but both parties were then so high in their demands, that we could hope for no success; and if the negotiation had ended without effect, we might have expected the common fate of arbitrators, the disobliging of both. Therefore, as it was our interest to keep well with both, I must still think it was the most prudent part we could act, to refuse the offered mediation.

"The next step of our foreign conduct exposed to reprehension, is the treaty of Hanover. Sir, if I were to give the true history of that treaty, which no gentleman can desire, I should, I am sure I could fully justify my own conduct; but as I do not desire to justify my own, without justifying his late majesty's conduct, I must observe, that his late majesty had such information, as convinced not only him, but those of his council, both at home and abroad, that some dangerous designs had been formed between the Emperor and Spain, at the time of their concluding the Treaty at Vienna, in May 1725. Designs, Sir, which were dangerous not only to the liberties of this nation, but to the liberties of Europe. They were not only to wrest Gibraltar and Port Mahon from this nation, and force the Pretender upon us, but they were to have Don Carlos married to the Emperor's eldest daughter, who would thereby have had a probability of uniting in his person, or in the person of some of his successors, the crowns of France and Spain, with the Imperial dignity, and the Austrian dominions. It was therefore highly reasonable, both in France and us, to take the alarm at such designs, and to think betimes of preventing their being carried into execution. But with regard to us, it was more particularly our business to take the alarm, because we were to have been immediately attacked. I shall grant, Sir, it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for Spain and the Emperor joined together to have invaded, or made themselves masters of any of the British dominions; but will it be said, they might not have invaded the king's dominions in Germany, in order to force him to a compliance with what they desired of him, as king of Great Britain? And
if

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if those dominions had been invaded on account of a quarrel with this nation, should we not have been obliged, both in honour and interest, to defend them? When we were thus threatened, it was therefore absolutely necessary for us to make an alliance with France; and that we might not trust too much to their assistance, it was likewise necessary to form alliances with the northern powers, and with some of the princes in Germany, which we never did, nor ever could do, without granting them immediate subsidies. These measures were therefore, I still think, not only prudent but necessary, and by these measures we made it much more dangerous for the Emperor and Spain to attack us, than it would otherwise have been.

"But still, Sir, though by these alliances we put ourselves upon an equal footing with our enemies, in case of an attack, yet, in order to preserve the tranquillity of Europe, as well as our own, there was something else to be done. We knew that war could not be begun and carried on without money; we knew that the Emperor had no money for that purpose, without receiving large remittances from Spain; and we knew that Spain could make no such remittances without receiving large returns of treasure from the West Indies. The only way, therefore, to render these two powers incapable of disturbing the tranquillity of Europe was, by sending a squadron to the West Indies, to stop the return of the Spanish galleons; and this made it necessary, at the same time, to send a squadron to the Mediterranean, for the security of our valuable possessions in that part of the world. By these measures the Emperor saw the impossibility of attacking us in any part of the world, because Spain could give him no assistance, either in money or troops; and the attack made by the Spaniards upon Gibraltar was so feeble, that we had no occasion to call upon our allies for assistance: a small squadron of our own prevented their attacking it by sea, and from their attack by land, we had nothing to fear; they might have knocked their brains out against inaccessible rocks, to this very day, without bringing that fortress into any danger.

"I do not pretend, Sir, to be a great master of foreign affairs. In that post in which I have the honour to serve his majesty, it is not my business to interfere; and as one of his majesty's council, I have but one voice; but if I had been the sole adviser of the treaty of Hanover, and of all the measures which were taken in pursuance of it, from what I have said, I hope it will appear, that I do not deserve to be censured, either as a weak or a wicked minister on that account."

The next measures which incurred censure were the guaranty of the
pragmatic

pragmatic sanction by the second treaty of Vienna, and the refusal of the cabinet to assist the house of Austria, in conformity with the articles of that guaranty.

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"As to the guaranty of the pragmatic sanction," he said, "I am really surprised to find that measure objected to; it was so universally approved of, both within doors and without, that till this very day I think no fault was ever found with it, unless it was that of being too long delayed. If it was so necessary for supporting the balance of power in Europe, as has been insisted on in this debate, to preserve intire the dominions of the house of Austria, surely it was not our business to insist upon a partition of them in favour of any of the princes of the empire. But if we had, could we have expected that the house of Austria would have agreed to any such partition, even for the acquisition of our guaranty? The king of Prussia had, it is true, a claim upon some lordships in Silesia; but that claim was absolutely denied by the court of Vienna, and was not at that time so much insisted on by the late king of Prussia. Nay, if he had lived till this time, I believe it would not now have been insisted on; for he acceded to that guaranty without any reservation of that claim; therefore, I must look upon this as an objection, which has since arisen from an accident, that could not then be foreseen, or provided against.

"I must therefore think, Sir, that our guaranty of the pragmatic sanction, or our manner of doing it, cannot now be objected to, nor any person censured by parliament for advising that measure. In regard to the refusal of the cabinet to assist the house of Austria, though it was prudent and right in us to enter into that guaranty, we were not, therefore, obliged to enter into every broil the house of Austria might afterwards lead themselves into; and therefore, we were not in honour obliged to take any share in the war which the Emperor brought upon himself in the year 1733, nor were we in interest obliged to take a share in that war, as long as neither side attempted to push their conquests farther than was consistent with the balance of power in Europe, which was a case that did not happen. For the power of the house of Austria was not diminished by the event of that war, because they got Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia, in lieu of Naples and Sicily; nor was the power of France much increased, because Lorraine was a province she had taken and kept possession of, during every war in which she had been engaged.

"As to the disputes with Spain, they had not then reached such a height, as to make it necessary for us to come to an open rupture. We had then reason to hope, that all differences would be accommodated in an amicable manner;;

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manner; and whilst we have any such hopes, it can never be prudent for us to engage ourselves in war, especially with Spain, where we have always had a very beneficial commerce. These hopes, 'tis true, Sir, at last proved abortive, but I never heard it was a crime to hope for the best. This sort of hope was the cause of the late convention; if Spain had performed her part of that preliminary treaty, I am sure it would not have been wrong in us, to have hoped for a friendly accommodation, and for that end to have waited nine or ten months longer, in which time the plenipotentiaries were, by the treaty, to have adjusted all the differences subsisting between the two nations. But the failure of Spain in performing what had been agreed to by this preliminary, put an end to all our hope, and then, and not till then, it became prudent to enter into hostilities, which were commenced as soon as possible after the expiration of the term limited for the payment of the £.95,000.

"Strong and virulent censures have been cast on me, for having commenced the war without a single ally, and this deficiency has been ascribed to the multifarious treaties in which I have bewildered myself. But although the authors of this imputation are well apprized that all these treaties have been submitted to and approved by parliament, yet they are now brought forward as crimes, without appealing to the judgment of parliament, and without proving or declaring that all or any of them were advised by me. A supposed sole minister is to be condemned and punished as the author of all; and what adds to the enormity is, that an attempt was made to convict him uncharged and unheard, without taking into consideration the most arduous crisis which ever occurred in the annals of Europe. Sweden corrupted by France; Denmark tempted and wavering; the landgrave of Hesse Cassel almost gained; the king of Prussia, the Emperor, and the Czarina, with whom alliances had been negotiating, dead; the Austrian dominions claimed by Spain and Bavaria; the elector of Saxony hesitating whether he should accede to the general confederacy planned by France; the court of Vienna irresolute and indecisive. In this critical juncture, if France enters into engagements with Prussia, and if the queen of Hungary hesitates and listens to France, are all or any of these events to be imputed to English counsels? and if to English counsels, why are they to be attributed to one man?

On domestic
affairs.

"I now come, Sir, to the second head, the conduct of domestic affairs; and here a most heinous charge is made, that the nation has been burthened with unnecessary expences, for the sole purpose of preventing the discharge of our debts, and the abolition of taxes. But this attack is more to the dishonour of the whole cabinet council than to me. If there is any ground for
this

this imputation, it is a charge upon king, lords, and commons, as corrupted, or imposed upon. And they have no proof of these allegations, but affect to substantiate them by common fame and public notoriety.

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"No expence has been incurred but what has been approved of, and provided for by parliament. The public treasure has been duly applied to the uses to which it was appropriated by parliament, and regular accounts have been annually laid before parliament, of every article of expence. If by foreign accidents, by the disputes of foreign states amongst themselves, or by their designs against us, the nation has often been put to an extraordinary expence, that expence cannot be said to have been unnecessary, because, if by saving it we had exposed the balance of power to danger, or ourselves to an attack, it would have cost, perhaps, a hundred times that sum, before we could recover from that danger, or repel that attack.

"In all such cases there will be a variety of opinions. I happened to be one of those who thought all these expences necessary, and I had the good fortune to have the majority of both houses of parliament on my side; but this, it seems, proceeded from bribery and corruption. Sir, if any one instance had been mentioned, if it had been shewn, that I ever offered a reward to any member of either house, or ever threatened to deprive any member of his office or employment, in order to influence his vote in parliament, there might have been some ground for this charge; but when it is so generally laid, I do not know what I can say to it, unless it be to deny it as generally and as positively as it has been asserted; and, thank God! till some proof be offered, I have the laws of the land, as well as the laws of charity in my favour.

"Some members of both houses have, it is true, been removed from their employments under the crown; but were they ever told, either by me, or by any other of his majesty's servants, that it was for opposing the measures of the administration in parliament? They were removed, because his majesty did not think fit to continue them longer in his service. His majesty had a right so to do, and I know no one that has a right to ask him, What dost thou? If his majesty had a mind that the favours of the crown should circulate, would not this of itself be a good reason for removing any of his servants? Would not this reason be approved of by the whole nation, except those who happen to be the present possessors? I cannot, therefore, see how this can be imputed as a crime, or how any of the king's ministers can be blamed for his doing what the public has no concern in; for if the public be well and faithfully served, it has no business to ask by whom.

"As to the particular charge urged against me, I mean that of the army

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debentures,

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debentures, I am surpris'd, Sir, to hear any thing relating to this affair charged upon me. Whatever blame may attach to this affair, it must be placed to the account of those that were in power, when I was, as they call it, the country gentleman: It was by them this affair was introduced, and conducted, and I came in only to pay off those public securities, which their management had reduced to a great discount, and consequently to redeem our public credit from that reproach, which they had brought upon it. The discount at which these army debentures were negotiated, was a strong and prevalent reason with parliament, to apply the sinking fund first to the payment of those debentures, but the sinking fund could not be applied to that purpose, till it began to produce something considerable, which was not till the year 1727. That the sinking fund was then to receive a great addition, was a fact publicly known in 1726; and if some people were sufficiently quick-sighted to foresee, that the parliament would probably make this use of it, and cunning enough to make the most of their own foresight, could I help it, or could they be blamed for doing so? But I defy my most inveterate enemy to prove, that I had any hand in bringing these debentures to a discount, or that I had any share in the profits by buying them up.

"In reply to those who confidently assert that the national debt is not decreased since 1727, and that the sinking fund has not been applied to the discharge of the public burthens, I can with truth declare, that a part of the debt has been paid off, and the landed interest has been very much eased, with respect to that most unequal and grievous burthen, the land tax. I say so, Sir, because upon examination it will appear, that within these sixteen or seventeen years, no less than £. 8,000,000 of our debt has been actually discharged, by the due application of the sinking fund; and at least £. 7,000,000 has been taken from that fund, and applied to the ease of the land tax. For if it had not been applied to the current service, we must have supplied that service by increasing the land tax; and as the sinking fund was originally designed for paying off our debts, and easing us of our taxes, the application of it in ease of the land tax, was certainly as proper and as necessary an use as could be made. And I little thought that giving relief to landed gentlemen, would have been brought against me as a crime.

On the conduct of the war.

"I shall now advert to the third topic of accusation, the conduct of the war. I have already stated in what manner, and under what circumstances hostilities commenced, and as I am neither general nor admiral, as I have nothing to do either with our navy or army, I am sure I am not answerable for the prosecution of it. But were I to answer for every thing, no fault could, I think, be found with my conduct in the prosecution of the war. It has

from the beginning been carried on with as much vigour, and as great care of our trade, as was consistent with our safety at home, and with the circumstances we were in at the beginning of the war. If our attacks upon the enemy were too long delayed, or if they have not been so vigorous or so frequent as they ought to have been, those only are to blame who have for many years been haranguing against standing armies; for without a sufficient number of regular troops in proportion to the numbers kept up by our neighbours, I am sure, we can neither defend ourselves, nor offend our enemies. On the supposed miscarriages of the war, so unfairly stated, and so unjustly imputed to me, I could, with great ease, frame an incontrovertible defence; but as I have trespassed so long on the time of the house, I shall not weaken the effect of that forcible exculpation so generously and disinterestedly advanced by the right honourable gentleman who so meritoriously presides at the admiralty.

“ If my whole administration is to be scrutinised and arraigned, why are the most favourable parts to be omitted? If facts are to be accumulated on one side, why not on the other? And why may not I be permitted to speak in my *own favour*? Was I not called by the voice of the king and the nation to remedy the fatal effects of the South Sea project, and to support declining credit? Was I not placed at the head of the treasury, when the revenues were in the greatest confusion? Is credit revived, and does it now flourish? Is it not at an incredible height, and if so, to whom must that circumstance be attributed? Has not tranquillity been preserved both at home and abroad, notwithstanding a most unreasonable and violent opposition? Has the true interest of the nation been pursued, or has trade flourished? Have gentlemen produced one instance of this exorbitant power, of the influence which I extend to all parts of the nation, of the tyranny with which I oppress those who oppose, and the liberality with which I reward those who support me? But having first invested me with a kind of mock dignity, and styled me a prime minister, they impute to me an unpardonable abuse of that chimerical authority which they only have created and conferred. If they are really persuaded that the army is annually established by me, that I have the sole disposal of posts and honours, that I employ this power in the destruction of liberty, and the diminution of commerce, let me awaken them from their delusion. Let me expose to their view the real condition of the public weal; let me shew them that the crown has made no encroachments, that all supplies have been granted by parliament, that all questions have been debated with the same freedom as before the fatal period, in which my

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counsels are said to have gained the ascendancy: An ascendancy from which they deduce the loss of trade, the approach of slavery, the preponderance of prerogative, and the extension of influence. But I am far from believing that they feel those apprehensions which they so earnestly labour to communicate to others, and I have too high an opinion of their sagacity not to conclude that, even in their own judgment, they are complaining of grievances that they do not suffer, and promoting rather their private interest than that of the public.

“What is this unbounded sole power which is imputed to me? How has it discovered itself, or how has it been proved?

“What have been the effects of the corruption, ambition, and avarice, with which I am so abundantly charged?

“Have I ever been suspected of being corrupted? A strange phenomenon, a corrupter himself not corrupt. Is ambition imputed to me? Why then do I still continue a commoner? I, who refused a white staff and a peerage. I had, indeed, like to have forgotten the little ornament about my shoulders, which gentlemen have so repeatedly mentioned in terms of sarcastic obloquy. But surely, though this may be regarded with envy or indignation in another place, it cannot be supposed to raise any resentment in this house, where many may be pleased to see those honours which their ancestors have worn, restored again to the commons.

“Have I given any symptoms of an avaricious disposition? Have I obtained any grants from the crown since I have been placed at the head of the treasury? Has my conduct been different from that which others in the same station would have followed? Have I acted wrong in giving the place of auditor to my son, and in providing for my own family? I trust that their advancement will not be imputed to me as a crime, unless it shall be proved that I placed them in offices of trust and responsibility for which they were unfit.

“But while I unequivocally deny that I am sole and prime minister, and that to my influence and direction all the measures of government must be attributed, yet I will not shrink from the responsibility which attaches to the post I have the honour to hold; and should, during the long period in which I have sat upon this bench, any one step taken by government be proved to be either disgraceful or disadvantageous to the nation, I am ready to hold myself accountable.

“To conclude, Sir, though I shall always be proud of the honour of any trust or confidence from his majesty, yet I shall always be ready to remove from

from his councils and presence, when he thinks fit; and therefore I should think myself very little concerned in the event of the present question, if it were not for the encroachment that will thereby be made upon the prerogatives of the crown. But I must think, that an address to his majesty to remove one of his servants, without so much as alledging any particular crime against him, is one of the greatest encroachments that was ever made upon the prerogatives of the crown; and therefore, for the sake of my master, without any regard for my own, I hope all those that have a due regard for our constitution, and for the rights and prerogatives of the crown, without which our constitution cannot be preserved, will be against this motion."

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This speech made a deep impression on the house. It was delivered in a most animated and fascinating manner, and with more dignity than he usually assumed. The motion was negatived by 290 against 106*; a great and unusual majority, which proceeded from the schism between the Tories and the Whigs, and the secession of Shippen and his friends.

Motion negatived.

The same motion was made by lord Carteret the same day in the house of lords, and supported with more pertinacity and vigour than in the commons. The schism between the Tories and Whigs had not extended to that house, and the lords in opposition acted uniformly and consistently in one compact phalanx.

Motion in the lords.

The principal speakers against the minister were, the dukes of Bedford and Argyle, the earls of Sandwich, Westmoreland, Berkshire, Carlisle, Abingdon, and Halifax, and the lords Haverham and Bathurst; the opposers of the motion were, the lord chancellor, the dukes of Newcastle and Devonshire, the bishop of Salisbury (Sherlock) the earl of Ilay, and lord Hervey.

The motion was negatived by 108 against 59, but a warm protest was signed by 31 peers. The prince of Wales was present, but did not vote; and it was remarked that several peers who had places under government, particularly the earl of Wilmington, did not divide with either party†.

Negatived.

Immediately after the motion was thus disposed of, the duke of Marlborough rose, and moved to resolve, "that any attempt to inflict any kind of punishment on any person, without allowing him an opportunity to make his defence, or without proof of any crime or misdemeanour committed by him, is contrary to natural justice, the fundamental laws of this realm, and the antient established usage of parliaments; and it is a high infringement on the liberties of the subject."

* Journals.

† Lords' Debates. Tindal.

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The truth of the proposition contained in this motion, was admitted by the warmest friends of the last motion; but, contrary to all principles of reasoning, they insisted upon the treaties that lay before them, as being full evidences against the minister, but without offering one circumstance of evidence to prove that those treaties had been solely conducted by him, or that they were detrimental in themselves to the honour and interest of the nation. They made, however, a faint endeavour to set aside the motion upon the previous question, but it was carried, though strong protests were entered upon both questions*.

Conduct and
anecdotes of
Shippen.

In this whole transaction, the greatest surprise was excited by the conduct of Shippen.

His secession exposed him to much obloquy from the party whom he deserted. Some inferred, that his absence was purchased by a bribe †, and did not scruple to assert, that he received an annual pension from government; others have been so unjust as to assert that this rumour was industriously raised by Walpole, to decry his integrity, and diminish his influence ‡. It might be sufficient to refute this unjust reflection, by observing, that his wife's fortune placed him far above all temptation, and that he had exhibited a strong proof of disinterestedness at a very trying period. When Shippen was committed to the Tower, for declaring that the only infelicity in his majesty's reign was, that he was unacquainted with our language and constitution, and that the speech from the throne was rather calculated for the meridian of Germany, than of Great Britain; the prince of Wales, then dissatisfied with his father, sent general Churchill, his groom of the bed-chamber, to him, with the offer of a present of £. 1,000; which Shippen declined §. That he was honest and inflexible, is undoubted! Even Walpole himself has attested this truth, by repeatedly declaring, not only while he was at the head of affairs, but after his resignation, not only during the life of Shippen, but after his death, that he would not say who was corrupted, but he would say who *was* not corruptible, that man was Shippen ||.

The real cause of his secession, I am enabled to ascertain, from the account of a person nearly related to him: Sir Robert Walpole having discovered a correspondence, which one of Shippen's friends carried on with the Pretender, Shippen called on the minister, and desired him to save his friend.

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 429.

† Opinions of the dukes of Marlborough.

‡ Sheridan's Life of Swift, p. 222.

§ Etough, from Dr. Middleton, to whom it was communicated by Shippen.

|| From lord Orford.

Sir Robert willingly complied: and then said, Mr. Shippen, I cannot desire you to vote with the administration, for with your principles, I have no right to expect it. But I only require, whenever any question is brought forward in the house personally affecting me, that you will recollect the favour I have now granted you. It is likewise to be observed, that this was only a temporary truce, for he soon resumed his accustomed opposition, and gave his assistance to those strenuous measures, which drove the minister from the helm.

If uniformity of principles, and consistency of conduct, be admitted as a merit, William Shippen certainly deserves that eulogium as much or more than any other member of the house of commons. Yet in considering the persons who formed the minority, we ought to be on our guard, lest we mistake the heat of party for true patriotism; and we should also be wary in trusting to expressions which are become almost cant words, and have been handed from one writer to another, until they have been adopted as unquestionable truths. Thus he is called by various writers, "*the English Cato*," "*inflexible patriot*;" and Pope has said of him,

I love to pour out all myself, as plain
As *honest Shippen*, or downright Montagne.

But though we may allow him to be honest and incorruptible, yet the appellation of true patriot, can by no means be justly conferred on him; unless we should style that man a patriot, who was notoriously disaffected to the protestant succession, and publicly known to be in the interests of the Pretender; who did not affect even to conceal his sentiments, who in the heterogeneous meetings of the opposition, frequently disgusted the old Whigs with declarations on the necessity of restoring the Stuarts*; and who in company with his intimate friends, was often heard to declare, that he waited for orders from Rome, before he would give his vote in the house of commons.

The family of Shippen was settled in Cheshire. His father, who was rector of Stockport, had four sons, one of whom was president of Brasen Nose college, Oxford, a man of distinguished abilities, and of the same principles with his brother; and one daughter, who married Mr. Leyborne, a gentleman of respectable family in Yorkshire.

William Shippen was born about the year 1672, and received his education at Stockport school, which was conducted with great credit by a master whose name was Dale. He first came into parliament in 1707, for Bramber

* From the bishop of Salisbury.

Period VII.
1737 to 1742.

in Suffex, in the place of John Aſgill, who was expelled for blaſphemy, by the intereſt of lord Plymouth, whoſe ſon Dixy Windſor, was his brother-in-law. He again repreſented that borough in 1710. In 1713, when he was choſen for Saltaſh in Cornwall, probably by government intereſt, but waved his ſeat in 1714, on being elected for Newton in Lancaſhire, through the intereſt of Mr. Legh of Lime Park, in Cheſhire, whoſe aunt, lady Clarke, was married to his brother Dr. Shippen, which place he continued to repreſent until his death. His paternal eſtate was very ſmall, not exceeding £. 400 a year, but he obtained a fortune of not leſs than 70,000 by his wife, who was daughter and co-heireſs of Sir Richard Stote, knight, of the county of Northumberland, by whom he left no children. His way of living was in all reſpects ſimple and æconomical. Before his marriage he never exceeded his income, and even afterwards his expences were not proportionable to the largeneſs of his eſtate.

For a ſhort period he had apartments in Holland-houſe, from whence he dates ſeveral of his letters to biſhop Atterbury, with whom he maintained a conſtant correſpondence, during his exile*. And William Morrice mentions him in one of his letters as a perſon who continued fixed to his principles, or as he expreſſes himſelf, *as honeſt as ever*. He ſeems to have had no country reſidence, except a hired houſe on Richmond-hill, but made excuſions in ſummer to his wife's relations in Northumberland. His uſual place of abode was London, in the latter period of his life, in Norfolk Street, and his houſe was the rendezvous for perſons of rank, learning, and abilities; his manner was pleaſing and dignified, and his converſation was replete with vivacity and wit.

Shippen and Sir Robert Walpole had always a perſonal regard for each other. He was frequently heard to ſay, Robin and I are two honeſt men. He is for king George, and I for king James, but thoſe men with long cravats (meaning Sandys, Sir John Ruſhout, Gybbon, and others) only deſire places, either under king George or king James.

By the accounts of thoſe † who had heard him in the houſe of commons, his manner was highly energetic and ſpirited as to ſentiment and expreſſion; but he generally ſpoke in a low tone of voice, with too great rapidity, and held his glove before his mouth. His ſpeeches uſually contained ſome pointed period, which peculiarly applied to the ſubject in debate, and which he uttered with great animation.

* Intercepted letters. Orford Papers.

† From the late earl of Orford.

Shippen published several pamphlets, the titles of which I cannot ascertain: he may be supposed to have obtained some reputation as a poet, by the mention which Sheffield, duke of Buckingham, makes of him in his poem, "The Election of a Poet Laureat:"

Chapter 36.

1741.

To Shippen, Apollo was cold with respect,
But said in a greater assembly he shin'd:
As places were things he had ever declin'd.

Shippen wrote two political poems. *Faction Displayed*, and *Moderation Displayed*. In the first he draws the characters of the great Whig lords, under the names of the principal Romans who were engaged in Cataline's conspiracy. This satire is severe and caustic, but the lines are, in general, rough and inharmonious. The concluding passage, which refers to the death of the duke of Gloucester, is not without merit:

So by the course of the revolving spheres,
Whene'er a new discover'd star appears;
Astronomers, with pleasure and amaze,
Upon the infant luminary gaze.
They find their heavens enlarg'd, and wait from thence
Some blest, some more than common influence;
But suddenly, alas! the fleeting light
Retiring, leaves their hopes involv'd in endless night.

His wife was extremely penurious, and from a peculiarity of temper, unwilling to mix in society. She was much courted by queen Caroline, but having imbibed from her husband a great independency of principle, ostentatiously affected to decline all intercourse with the court.

The fortune which he received with his wife, and the money which he had saved, came to her on his death, in consequence of a compact, that the survivor should inherit the whole. As neither he nor any of his brothers left any sons, his paternal estate passed to his nephew Dr. Leyborne, principal of Albion-hall, Oxford, and Mr. Leyborne, a merchant of the factory at Lisbon. Shippen's widow lived to a great age, her infirmities being such as to prevent her making a will, her ample fortune therefore devolved on her sister Mrs. Dixie Windfor*.

* Shippen's niece, Miss Leyborne, was married to the Rev. Mr. Taylor. She was mother to Mrs. Willes, widow of the late learned and much respected judge, to whom I am principally indebted for these anecdotes:

A collateral branch of the family of Shippen is settled in Philadelphia, one of them married Laurens, who was president of the congress, and another, the American general Arnold.

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CHAPTER THE FIFTY-SEVENTH:

1741.

Proceedings of Parliament on the Austrian Subsidy.—Grant of Three hundred thousand Pounds to the Queen of Hungary.—Her Inflexibility—and disastrous Situation.

Proceedings
on the Aus-
trian subsidy.

THE only parliamentary measure in this session which deserves farther notice, was the grant of a subsidy to the queen of Hungary, which finally involved England in a war with France. It was undoubtedly neither consonant to the wishes or sentiments of the minister, who had earnestly exerted himself to bring about an accommodation between Prussia and Austria, to promote a measure calculated to encourage the obstinacy of Maria Theresa at a moment when she seemed wavering and irresolute. But the voice of the nation loudly echoed the unceasing cry of opposition in favour of Maria Theresa. The king was alarmed for his German dominions, the majority of the cabinet inclined to vigorous measures, and it was imagined that a decided resolution of parliament to support the house of Austria, would intimidate the king of Prussia, and induce him to lower his terms of accommodation.

April 8.

In consequence of these prevailing sentiments, the king opened the subject in a speech from the throne. He said,

King's
speech.

“At the opening of this session, I took notice to you of the death of the late Emperor, and of my resolution to adhere to the engagements I am under, in order to the maintaining of the balance of power, and the liberties of Europe, on that important occasion. The assurances I received from you, in return to this communication, were perfectly agreeable to that zeal and vigour which this parliament has always exerted in the support of the honour and interest of my crown and kingdoms, and of the common cause.

“The war which has since broke out, and been carried on in part of the Austrian dominions, and the various and extensive claims which are publicly made on the late Emperor's succession, are new events, that require the

the utmost care and attention, as they may involve all Europe in a bloody war, and in consequence, expose the dominions of such princes as shall take part in support of the pragmatic sanction to imminent and immediate danger. The queen of Hungary has already made a requisition of the twelve thousand men, expressly stipulated by treaty; and thereupon I have demanded of the king of Denmark, and of the king of Sweden, as Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, their respective bodies of troops, consisting of six thousand men each, to be in readiness to march forthwith to the assistance of her Hungarian majesty. I am also concerting such further measures as may obviate and disappoint the dangerous designs and attempts, that may be forming, or carried on, in favour of any unjust pretensions, to the prejudice of the house of Austria. In this complicated and uncertain state of things, many incidents may arise, during the time when, by reason of the approaching conclusion of this parliament, it may be impossible for me to have your advice and assistance, which may make it necessary for me to enter into still larger expences for maintaining the pragmatic sanction. In a conjuncture so critical, I have thought it proper to lay these important considerations before you; and to desire the concurrence of my parliament, in enabling me to contribute in the most effectual manner to the support of the queen of Hungary, the preventing by all reasonable means the subversion of the house of Austria, and to the maintaining the liberties and balance of power in Europe*."

When the commons returned, Clutterbuck † recapitulated the occasion which had induced the king to make this application. He expatiated on the ambitious designs of France, exposed the danger of Europe from the destruction of the house of Austria, the injustice of Prussia in the invasion of Silesia, and the wisdom and propriety of asserting the pragmatic sanction, and fulfilling their engagements with the house of Austria. As by this conduct, he observed, the king would expose his electoral dominions, and as the danger would be increased not by any disputes with the neighbouring princes, but by his firmness in asserting the general rights of Europe, and as the consequences of this conduct would be chiefly beneficial to Great Britain, the house ought to support him in the prosecution of this design: He concluded, "I hope every gentleman in this house, will agree with me, that we ought to declare our approbation of these measures, in such terms as may shew the world, that those who shall dare to obstruct them, must resolve to incur the resentment of this nation, and expose themselves to all the oppo-

Debate on
motion for
address.

* Journals. Chandler.

† A lord of the treasury.

Period VII.
1737 to 1742.

sition that the parliament of Great Britain can send forth against them. We ought to pronounce that the territories of Hanover will be considered on this occasion as the dominions of England, and that any attack on one or the other will be equally resented. I therefore move, that an humble address be presented, "to express our dutiful sense of his majesty's regard for the rights of the queen of Hungary, and for maintaining the pragmatic sanction; to declare our concurrence in the prudent measures, which his majesty is pursuing for the preservation of the liberties and balance of power in Europe; to acknowledge his majesty's wisdom and resolution, in not suffering himself to be diverted from steadily persevering in his just purposes of fulfilling his engagements with the house of Austria*."

Fox supported the address, and observed, "If the proposed opposition to the king of Prussia should incite him, or any other power, to an invasion of his majesty's foreign dominions, we cannot refuse them our protection and assistance; for as they suffer for the cause which we engaged to support, and suffer only by our measures, we are, at least as allies, obliged by the laws of equity, and the general compacts of mankind, to arm in their defence; and what may be claimed by the common right of allies, we shall surely not deny them, only because they own the same monarch with ourselves."

As for some time the opposition had been clamorous in arraigning the minister for not supporting the queen of Hungary, they could not consistently resist the motion. But fortunately, the expression in the speech alluding to Hanover, and the specific declaration of the member who moved the address, that the king's German dominions were the object of defence, gave them an opportunity of descanting on the popular topic of Hanoverian interest, without appearing to decry the propriety of supporting the pragmatic sanction, or arraigning the principles on which the motion was founded.

Pulteney readily allowed the ambitious designs of France, and the necessity of counteracting them. He then observed, that the only hopes of effecting that beneficial purpose rested on the house of Austria. For this reason the uniform exertions of this country had been employed in aggrandising that power, as a counterpoise to the increasing weight of the house of Bourbon. But this wise plan was wholly overturned, and the fabric which this country had so long and so assiduously laboured to erect, was at once destroyed, by the treaty of Hanover, and from that time, almost to the present moment, almost all our exertions had been uniformly directed to the

* Gentleman's Magazine for 1742.

same mischievous purpose. "By what impulse," he added, "or by what infatuation, these assertors of liberty, these enemies of France, these guardians of the balance of power, were on the sudden prevailed on to declare in favour of the power whom they had so long thought it their chief interest and highest honour to oppose, must be discovered by sagacity superior to mine. But after such perplexity of councils, and such fluctuation of conduct, if our concurrence is necessary to increase his majesty's influence on the continent, to animate the friends of the house of Austria, or to repress the disturbers of the public tranquillity, I shall willingly unite with the most zealous advocates for the administration in any vote of approbation or assistance, not contrary to the act of settlement, that important and well concerted act, by which the present family was advanced to the throne, and by which it was provided that England shall never be involved in a war for the enlargement or protection of the dominions of Hanover, dominions from which we never expected nor received any benefit, and for which therefore nothing ought to be either suffered or hazarded.

"If it should again be necessary to form a confederacy, and to unite the powers of Europe against the house of Bourbon, that ambitious and restless family, by which the repose of the world is almost every day interrupted, which is incessantly labouring against the happiness of human nature, and seeking every hour an opportunity of new encroachments, I declare that I shall not only, with the greatest cheerfulness, bear my share of the public expence, but endeavour to reconcile others to their part of the calamities of war. This I have advanced, in confidence that sufficient care shall be taken, that in any new alliance, we shall be parties, not principals, that the expence of war, as the advantage of victory, shall be common; and that those who unite with us shall be our allies, not our mercenaries."

The reply of the minister was specific and manly: "We are obliged, by this treaty, to supply the house of Austria with twelve thousand men, and the Dutch, who were engaged in it, by our example, have promised a supply of five thousand. This force, joined to those armies which the large dominions of that family enable them to raise, were conceived sufficient to repel any enemy by whom their rights should be invaded. But because in affairs of such importance nothing is to be left to hazard, because the preservation of the equipoise of power, on which the liberties of almost all mankind, who can call themselves free, must be acknowledged to depend, ought to be rather certain, than barely probable; it is stipulated farther, both by the Dutch and ourselves, that if the supplies specified in the first article shall appear insufficient, we shall unite our whole force in the

Period VII. the defence of our ally, and struggle once more for independence, with ar-
 1737 to 1742. dour proportioned to the importance of our cause.

“By these stipulations, no engagements have been formed that can be imagined to have been prohibited by the act of settlement, by which it is provided, that the house of Hanover shall not plunge this nation into a war, for the sake of their foreign dominions, without the consent of the parliament; for this war is by no means entered upon for the particular security of Hanover, but for the general advantage of Europe, to repress the ambition of the French, and to preserve ourselves and our posterity from the most abject dependance upon a nation, exasperated against us by a long opposition and hereditary hatred.

“Nor is the act of settlement only preserved unviolated, by the reasons of the present alliance, but by the regular concurrence of the parliament, which his majesty has desired, notwithstanding his indubitable right of making peace and war by his own authority. I cannot, therefore, imagine upon what pretence it can be urged that the law, which requires that no war shall be made on account of the Hanoverian dominions without the consent of parliament is violated, when it is evident that the war is made upon other motives, and the concurrence of the parliament is solemnly desired.”

Sandys having made the same objection as Pulteney, and observed that the motion was inconsistent with the trust reposed in the commons by the constitution, who owe allegiance to the king of Great Britain and not to the elector of Hanover, was answered by Horace Walpole, who defended the treaty of Hanover. After a few remarks from Viner, against the propriety of opposing the king of Prussia's demands, before they were fully understood, lord Gage concluded the debate by observing, “I have always been taught that allegiance to my prince is consistent with fidelity to my country, that the interest of the king and the people of Great Britain is the same, and that he only is a true subject of the crown, who is a steady promoter of the happiness of the nation.

“For this reason I think it necessary to declare, that Hanover is always to be considered as a sovereignty separate from that of England, and as a country with laws and interests distinct from our's; and that it is the duty of the representatives of this nation, to take care that interests so different may never be confounded, and that England may incur no expence of which Hanover alone can enjoy the advantage. If the elector of Hanover should be engaged in war with any of the neighbouring sovereigns, who should be enabled by a victory to enter into the country, and carry the terrors of war through all his territories, it would by no means be necessary for this nation

tion to interpose; for the elector of Hanover might lose his dominions without any disadvantage or dishonour to the king or people of England."

It was evident that the minority, in making these observations, did not intend to oppose the motion, but only to cast a reproach upon administration; for the question was carried without a division*.

The address being carried, the minister moved for an aid of £. 300,000 to the queen of Hungary. He briefly stated the necessity of preventing the dismemberment of the Austrian dominions, in which the interests of Great Britain were necessarily involved. Shippen opposed the motion, in a speech replete with sarcastic irony. He said, "though it cannot be expected I have forgotten the resentment which I have formerly drawn upon myself by an open declaration of my sentiments with regard to Hanover†, I stand up again with equal confidence, to make my protestations against any interposition in the affairs of that country, and to avow my dislike of the promise lately made to defend it: A promise, inconsistent, in my opinion, with that important and inviolable law, the act of settlement! A promise, which, if it could have been foreknown, would, perhaps, have for ever precluded from the succession, that illustrious family, to which we owe such numberless blessings, such continued felicity. Far be it from me to insinuate that we can be too grateful to his majesty, or too zealous in our adherence to him; only let us remember that true gratitude consists in real benefits, in promoting the true interest of him to whom we are indebted; and surely, by hazarding the welfare of Great Britain in defence of Hanover, we shall very little consult the advantage or promote the greatness of our king.

"It is well known how inconsiderable in the sight of those, by whom the succession was established, Hanover appeared, in comparison with Great Britain. Those men, to whom even their enemies have seldom denied praise for knowledge and capacity, and who have been so loudly celebrated by many who have joined in the last address, for their honest zeal, and the love of their country, enacted, that the king of Great Britain should never visit those important territories, which we have so solemnly promised to defend, at the hazard of their happiness. It was evidently their design that our sovereign, engrossed by the care of his new subjects, a care which, as they reasonably imagined, would arise from gratitude for dignity and power so

* It is remarkable that Chandler has omitted to mention this debate, although it is given in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, from which publication he took the succeeding debate. —Tindal slightly alludes to it, in a manner,

however, which authenticates the account in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Neither Smollett or Belsham take the least notice of it.

† Alluding to his commitment to the tower. See chap. 17. p. 112.

Chapter 57.

1741.

Address
carried.

April 13.

Austrian
subsidy
granted.

liberally

Period VII.

1737¹⁰ 1742.

liberally conferred, should in time forget that corner of the earth, on which his ancestors had resided, and act, not as elector of Hanover, but as king of Great Britain, as the governor of a mighty nation, and the lord of large dominions.

"It was expressly determined, that this nation should never be involved in a war for the defence of the dominions on the continent, and doubtless the same policy that has restrained us from extending our conquests in countries, from which some advantages might be received, ought to forbid all expensive and hazardous measures, for the sake of territories from whence no benefit can be reaped *."

Viner followed Shippen in opposing the grant, and after considering the dispute between Austria and Prussia as a business in which England had no immediate concern, exclaimed, "Are we to stand up singly in defence of the pragmatic sanction, to fight the quarrel of others, or live in perpetual war that our neighbours may be at peace †?"

The minister and his friends took no notice of the indecorous allusions in Shippen's speech, but defended the motion on the ground of national faith. After a few observations from Pulteney, who supported the expediency of the measure, and some farther remarks from the minister, the question was carried without a division.

Effects of the grant.

This grant, however founded on justice and consistent with national honour, must be lamented as premature, because it frustrated the wise plan which Walpole was forming for the pacification of Germany. He saw and lamented the difficulties which prevented an accommodation with Prussia; he strongly inculcated the necessity of a grand confederacy against France, and conscious that all alliances to that purpose would prove inefficient and ineffectual unless Prussia was included, he laboured to overcome the pertinacious resistance of the queen of Hungary. By his direction Horace Walpole had frequent conferences with count Ostein ‡, the Imperial minister in London; in which he fully explained the state of Europe, the designs of France, and the peculiar situation of England. He represented in such strong terms the fatal consequences to be apprehended from the hostility of the king of Prussia, and the good effects to be derived from his alliances, as fully convinced the Austrian minister. Ostein declared his ready assent to the force of these argu-

* Chandler.

† Ibid. This debate is greatly misrepresented by Belsham. He observes, "HONEST SHIPPEN only ventured to oppose this wild and wanton waste of public money." To support this assertion he has transferred Viner's

speech to the first session of the next parliament. See Belsham, vol. 2. p. 44. 46.

‡ Letter from Horace Walpole to the duke of Cumberland, Nov. 29, 1746. Walpole Papers.

ments,

ments, and promised to place them in so favourable a light as should induce the queen to close with the propositions of Prussia. But this design was fatally counteracted by the spirit of Maria Theresa, by her reliance on the promises of France, and particularly by the ill-judged enthusiasm of the British nation, which called loudly for the most active exertions in her favour.

The vote of £. 300,000 had scarcely passed the commons, before lord Carteret assured Ostein, that the grant of that subsidy was not owing to the good disposition of the ministry, but extorted by the unanimous call of parliament, and the general voice of the people. Accordingly, the Austrian minister instantly changed his opinion, and instead of seconding the efforts of Walpole to persuade his mistress to enter into an accommodation with the king of Prussia, encouraged her to persevere in rejecting his demands, because the British nation would pour out the last drop of their blood, and spend their last penny in support of her just cause*.

In consequence of her inflexibility, the king of Prussia continued his inroads; he over-ran and conquered the remaining part of Silesia, and the grand confederacy, planned and consolidated by France, attacked the Austrian dominions on all sides. The elector of Bavaria, at the head of 70,000 troops, took Passau and Lintz, summoned Vienna to surrender, made himself master of Bohemia, was inaugurated king at Prague, and expected every moment his elevation to the Imperial throne. Two French armies poured like a torrent over the countries of Germany. The one, under marshal Broglio, joined the elector of Bavaria, and took possession of Prague; the other, led by marshal Maillebois, hovered on the banks of the Rhine, and threatening to spread themselves over Westphalia, awed the electorate of Hanover, and compelled George the Second to desert Maria Theresa, and to accept a neutrality, which was condemned both at home and abroad as a scandalous and pusillanimous measure.

The king of Sardinia threatened hostilities, and a Spanish army, under the marquis of Montemar, marched from Naples towards the frontiers of the Milanese; while the infant, Don Philip, at the head of a considerable corps, was preparing to penetrate through Dauphiné and Savoy, into Austrian Lombardy.

Maria Theresa, deserted by Russia and the United Provinces, and by all her allies, except Great Britain, quitted Vienna, which was preparing for a siege, took refuge at Presburg, and threw herself on the affection and zeal of her Hungarian subjects. Compelled by imperious necessity, she purchased

Chapter 57.

1741.

Disastrous
state of the
house of
Austria.

* Horace Walpole to the duke of Cumberland. Walpole Papers.

Period VII. 1737 to 1742. the neutrality of Prussia, by the cession of Lower Silesia. Her situation was truly deplorable, and her disasters rebounded on the minister. To his sinister auspices it was attributed that the constellation of the house of Bourbon seemed ascending to its zenith, and the star of England and Austria declining towards the horizon.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-EIGHTH:

1741.

Dissolution of Parliament.—State of the Ministry.—Walpole deserted or secretly thwarted by many of his former Friends.—Successful Exertions of the Opposition.—Westminster Election.—Schism in the Cabinet.—Neutrality of Hanover.—Supineness of Walpole.—Clamours against him.

Close of the parliament.

ON the 25th of April, the king put an end to the last session of this parliament, in a speech from the throne, in which, after thanking them for the zeal with which they had supported the measures of government, he added, "I will immediately give the necessary orders for calling a new parliament. There is not any thing I set so high a value upon, as the love and affection of my people; in which I have so entire a confidence, that it is with great satisfaction, I see this opportunity put into their hands, of giving me fresh proofs of it, in the choice of their representatives*."

Writs were issued for electing a new house of commons, returnable the 25th of June.

Contest of parties.

On the expiration of the parliament commenced the struggle of the contending parties, which was to terminate in the removal, or the firm establishment of Walpole.

May 7.
The king goes to Hanover.
Precarious situation of Walpole.

Notwithstanding a strong remonstrance from Sir Robert Walpole, the king embarked for his German dominions.

The minister was left in a precarious situation, to manage the elections, in the midst of an unsuccessful war, at variance with the majority of the ca-

* Journals, vol. 12. p. 337.

binet; and with the general spirit of the nation against him, at a time when the fears of Jacobitism, and the dread of a popish Pretender, had begun to subside. In this emergency, either betrayed by his pretended friends, deserted by those who ought to have supported him, deceived in imagining that the triumphant majority which had thrown out the motion to remove him, was an indication of the people's affection, or conceiving that a firm coalition between the Tories and disaffected Whigs, could not take place in time to oppose him, he abandoned himself to an inconsiderate security, and neglected to take his usual precautions.

The first great opposition to government took its rise in the city of Westminster, where the court was supposed to possess an unbounded influence. It had been usual for the electors to return the two members who were recommended by the crown. The representatives in the last parliament were, Sir Charles Wager, first lord of the admiralty, and lord Sundon, a lord of the treasury; and it was supposed that they would have been rechosen as usual, without opposition. But lord Sundon was very unpopular: he had been raised from a low condition to an Irish peerage, through the interest of his wife, who had been favourite bed-chamber woman to queen Caroline. The other candidate, Sir Charles Wager, was unexceptionable, both in his public and private character, but his attachment to the minister was a sufficient objection.

Some electors of Westminster proposed, very unexpectedly, admiral Vernon, then in the height of his popularity, and Mr. Irwin, a private gentleman of considerable fortune. The opposition at first despised, became formidable; and Sir Charles Wager being summoned to convoy the king to Holland, the management of the election was entrusted to ignorant vestrymen and violent justices. The party in opposition to the court candidates, became very tumultuous. The majority of the electors were decidedly in favour of the ministerial candidates, but lord Sundon was imprudently advised to close the poll, to order a party of guards to attend, and while the military power surrounded the hustings, the high bailiff returned him and Sir Charles Wager. This imprudent conduct highly exasperated the populace; the guards were insulted, Sundon was attacked, and narrowly escaped with life.

The example of the opposition at Westminster, diffused a general spirit throughout the kingdom, and violent contests were excited in all quarters. Large sums of money for supporting the expences were subscribed by Pulteney, the duchess of Marlborough, and the prince of Wales, who contracted great debts on this memorable occasion, and the managers of opposition employed

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Contested
election for
Westminster:And other
places.

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played this money with great advantage. Lord Falmouth gained over many of the Cornish boroughs, which had usually returned the members recommended by the crown: The duke of Argyle exerted himself with such effect in Scotland, that he baffled all the efforts of his brother, the earl of Ilay, who had long managed the interest of the crown in that quarter; and the majority of Scottish members, who had formed a strong phalanx in favour of government, were now ranged on the contrary side. These acquisitions were considered by opposition as a sure omen of success; and Dodington, in a letter to the duke of Argyle, drew a comparative statement of the two sides, in the future parliament, highly unfavourable to the ministerial party*. He justly observed, that a majority of sixteen, which was the utmost that the most sanguine friends of the minister could entertain hopes of forming at the commencement of the session, would soon become a minority. He laid down a plan of conduct and attack, which was wisely formed, and ably executed, the homogeneous parts were consolidated, and the whole phalanx, however divided and discordant in other respects, moved on uniformly to one great object, the removal of the minister.

Clamours
against the
minister.

Many causes concurred, in the present crisis, to render the efforts of Walpole for securing a sufficient majority in the new parliament ineffectual. He had continued so long in full power, that many, like the subjects of the Pope during a long reign, pined for a new administration, from a mere desire of change. Others formed dreams of future splendour and happiness, which were to beam on the nation, when the minister was removed; that minister, who was styled the father of corruption, who was accused of squandering the public money, and of drawing from the plunder of his devoted country, such immense riches as no individual had ever before amassed; who alone prevented the suppression of numerous taxes, the abolition of the national debt, and obstructed those plans of reform, which were to restore credit and dignity to the king and parliament. His fall was to produce a new æra, the revival of the golden age; a junction of all parties was to take place, and the sovereign, instead of being the chief of a sect, was to become at once the father of his people, and to reign in the hearts of his subjects. These notions were industriously circulated, and greedily swallowed by the deluded populace, until his removal became an object of national concern.

The popular clamour for a war with Spain had been so violent, that the resistance of the minister was deemed a shameful pusillanimity and dereliction

* Dodington to the duke of Argyle, June 18, 1741. Correspondence.

of national honour, and became the favourite theme of satire and contumely, both in prose and rhyme. "Sir Robert Walpole," as Burke justly observes, "was forced into the war in 1739, by the people, who were inflamed to this measure, by the most leading politicians, by the first orators, and the greatest poets of the times. For that war Pope sung his dying notes. For that war Johnson, in more energetic strains, employed the voice of his early genius. For that war Glover distinguished himself in the way in which his merit was the most natural and happy. The crowd readily followed the politicians, in the cry for a war which threatened little bloodshed, and which promised victories, that were attended with something more solid than glory. A war with Spain was a war of plunder *."

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But even those who acted with him laboured to undermine his power. Wilmington wished his downfall; trusting that if that event should take place, he should succeed as first lord of the treasury. He caballed with the principal leaders of opposition, and in a letter † to Dodington, congratulated him on his success in the elections of Melcomb and Weymouth, against the candidates supported by the minister. Newcastle, who had hitherto acted an underpart, aspired to be leader of the Whigs, and flattered himself that on the removal of Walpole, a considerable addition of power would be placed in his hands. He had even made clandestine overtures to the duke of Argyle, which had been disclosed to the minister ‡.

Schism in
the cabinet.

The minister was also greatly embarrassed with the conduct of foreign affairs, on which he was not always confidentially consulted. The negotiation which settled the neutrality of Hanover, was begun and nearly concluded, not only without his approbation, but almost without his knowledge §. The first positive information he received of it, was a private letter from the king, which was delivered to him in the presence of the duke of Newcastle, to whom he never disclosed the contents ||. He was apprehensive lest the nation should impute to him a measure so extremely unpopular. He complained that lord Harrington, the secretary of state who attended the king to Hanover, had not given earlier notice to the cabinet of England, and he told a foreign agent ¶, that the neutrality of Hanover was compulsory, and could not affect England. On mature reflection, however, he appreciated the necessity of the measure, and though dissatisfied with

Coolness of
the king.

* Thoughts on a Regicide Peace.

† Correspondence, May 16, 1741.

‡ Etough, from Sir Robert Walpole.

§ From the earl of Hardwicke.

|| Duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke.
July 19, 1741. Hardwicke Papers.¶ Zambini to baron Haflang. Orford
Papers.

the

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Virulent
calumnies.

the commencement of the negotiation, approved and sanctioned its conclusion.

Every means was now employed to traduce his character. The most calumnious reports were invented and diffused. It was rumoured that admiral Haddock had orders to avoid meeting and intercepting the Spanish transports carrying troops to Italy, for the purpose of taking possession of Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia, for Don Philip, under the guaranty of England. Even such wild and absurd fictions *, that he had betrayed to Fleury and Patinho, the projected operations against Spain, and that he received from those ministers large remittances to bribe the parliament, were audaciously advanced, and confidently believed.

The minister had been no sooner forced into the war, than the mode of conducting it became an object of obloquy and censure. Violent murmurs were diffused throughout the nation, grounded on the ill success of the war, the loss of the commerce with Spain, of which those who forced the minister to commence hostilities most loudly complained; the neutrality of Hanover was represented as inconsistent with the dignity and interests of England, and falsely imputed to him. To these immediate causes of complaint were added apprehensions of future evils; the conclusion of a dishonourable peace with Spain was said to be in agitation, of which the basis was to be

* These idle reports were repeated in an infamous pamphlet, intitled, "A Key to some late important Transactions, in several Letters from a certain Great Man, nobody knows where, wrote nobody knows when, and directed to nobody knows who," 1742. In the Memoirs of Madame Pompadour, is inserted a pretended letter from Sir Robert Walpole, to cardinal Fleury, requesting 3 millions of livres, to bribe the English parliament. "Je paie un subside à la moitié du parlement pour le tenir dans les bornes pacifiques: mais comme le roi n'a pas assez d'argent, & que ceux à qui je n'en donne point le déclarent ouvertement pour la guerre, il conviendrait que votre éminence me fît passer trois-millions-tournois, pour diminuer la voix de ceux que crient le plus fort. L'or est un métal ici qui adoucit le sang trop belliqueux. Il n'y a point de guerrier fougueux dans le parlement, qu'une pension de deux-mille livres ne rende très-pacifique. Ni plus ni moins, si l'Angleterre se déclare, il vous faudra payer des subides aux puissances pour faire la balance, sans compter que les succès de la guerre peuvent être incertains; au lieu qu'en m'envoiant de l'argent,

vous achetez la paix de la première main, &c." Memoirs de Pompadour, tom. 1. p. 58. I shall employ no time in discussing this letter, the numerous falsities and absurdities of which exhibit the strongest internal evidence that it is a forgery. It would not have been worth while to notice such a letter, inserted in a spurious publication, had it not been quoted as authentic, by the anonymous biographer of the earl of Chatham, with a malicious intention (v. 1. p. 122.) and had not the ingenious author of "Anecdotes of distinguished Persons," recently given his sanction to this unfounded rumour. "The cardinal, like our excellent minister Sir Robert Walpole, was forced into an expensive and ruinous war by the clamour of faction, and the folly of the people. On the cardinal's part, indeed, he had taken the most effectual method of keeping the two great nations of France and England in perfect harmony with one another: He used to remit to Sir Robert a certain sum of money occasionally, to be distributed amongst those who, from disappointment and a love of revenge, were likely in this country to counteract his pacific intentions." Vol. 4. p. 239.

the

the restitution of Gibraltar and Minorca; the aggrandisement of France, the abasement of the house of Austria, the establishment of the elector of Bavaria on the throne of the Empire, who would always remain attached to the house of Bourbon, and the guaranty of Parma to Don Philip, which would be a shameful breach of the guaranty of the pragmatic sanction.

The majority by which the motion to remove him was rejected, the death of Sir William Wyndham, and the retreat of Bolingbroke into France, rendered him indolent, and inspired him with too much confidence in the support of the king, and in the strength of his friends. "His success on this occasion," as a contemporary pamphleteer justly expresses himself, "threw him into a lethargy of power. He imagined that the breach between the Whigs and the Tories was too great to be repaired during the time of electing a new parliament; he thought that it would daily become wider; he seems to have mistaken the motives which induced the Tories to act as they did, and formed too favourable a judgment of the temper and spirit manifested by the people on that unjust motion. He gave them time to reconcile this temporary ebb, and suffered the popular opinion against him to flow back again with increasing violence *."

While the minister laboured under this pressure of great unpopularity; while he was arraigned for the measures of others, of which he was accused of being the sole director; while the cabinet was divided, and the support from the crown so feeble; the exertions on the side of government were inadequate to the vigorous efforts made by opposition. The Tories and Jacobites were reconciled with the disaffected Whigs, and all united to demolish their common enemy. Letters from the Pretender † were circulated among the Jacobites and high Tories, exhorting them to use all their efforts for the purpose of the disgrace of Sir Robert Walpole; and such was the temper of the people, that his fall became the open or secret wish of all parties.

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1741.

Supineness of
the minister.Activity of
opposition.

* A View of the whole Conduct of a late Eminent Patriot, p. 148.

† From lord Orford.—Enough also, in a letter to Horace Walpole, says, "The Pretender, as this your great brother positively assured me, to his certain knowledge, sent at least an

hundred letters, which were transmitted to his friends, in November 1741. The purport of them was to engage them to use all possible endeavours, in order to compass Walpole's demolition." Walpole Papers.

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CHAPTER THE FIFTY-NINTH:

1741—1742.

Meeting of Parliament.—Complexion of the new House of Commons.—King's Speech.—Walpole permits an Alteration to be made in the Address.—Small Majority in Favour of the Boskney Election.—The Appointment of a Chairman of the Committee of Election carried against him.—Loses the Question of the Westminster Election.—Adjournment of the House.—Ineffectual Attempt to detach the Prince of Wales from the Opposition.—House again assembles.—Walpole loses the Chippenham Election.—Adjournment of the House of Commons, at the King's Request.—Sir Robert Walpole created Earl of Orford, and resigns.—Affecting interview with the King.—Regret of his Friends.

Meeting of
the new par-
liament.

King's
speech.

THE new parliament assembled on the 4th of December; when Arthur Onslow was rechosen speaker. On the 8th, the king made a speech from the throne. He said:

“It is always a great satisfaction to me to meet you assembled in parliament; and especially at this time, when the posture of affairs makes your counsel and assistance so necessary; and when by means of the new elections, I may have an opportunity of knowing the more immediate sense and disposition of my people in general, from their representatives chosen, during a season, which has been attended with a great variety of incidents of the greatest consequence and expectation, and during the course of the war, in which we are engaged with the crown of Spain; a war, in itself, just and necessary, entered into by the repeated advice of both houses of parliament, and particularly recommended to me, to be carried on in America, which has been my principal care. I can therefore make no doubt, but that you are met together, fully sensible of our present situation, and prepared to give me such advice, as shall be most conducive to the honour and true interest of my crown and kingdoms.”

He next mentioned the powerful confederacy formed against the queen of Hungary, &c. “Had other powers,” he said, “that were under the like engagements with me, answered the just expectations they had so solemnly given,

given, the support of the common cause had been attended with less difficulty. I have, pursuant to the advice of my parliament, ever since the death of the late Emperor, exerted myself in support of the house of Austria. I have endeavoured, by the most proper and early applications, to induce other powers that were equally engaged with me, and united by common interest, to concert such measures as so important and critical a conjuncture required; and where an accommodation seemed to me to be necessary, I laboured to reconcile those princes, whose union would have been the most effectual means to prevent the mischiefs that have happened, and the best security for the safety and interest of the whole. Although my endeavours have not hitherto had the desired effect, I cannot but still hope, that a just sense of the common and approaching danger will produce a more favourable turn in the counsels of other nations." He then exhorted parliament to put the nation in a condition of assisting its friends, defeating its enemies in any attempts they might make against him or his dominions, and concluded with an exhortation, that they would act with unanimity, vigour, and dispatch *.

The remarkable caution with which the king had always mentioned any thing relating to his allies, made this speech the more noticed, and it was generally supposed not to have been dictated by the minister †, a circumstance which seemed to demonstrate, that there was a preponderating party against him in the cabinet.

It soon appeared from the complexion of the house, and the conduct of the minister, that his power and influence were on the decline. An address of thanks being proposed by Henry Herbert, some of the opposition objected to a clause, "for returning his majesty the thanks of this house, for his royal care in prosecuting the war with Spain." Sir Robert Walpole now felt, for the first time, the awkwardness of his situation, and he appeared "shorn of his strength." Instead of opposing with spirit any alteration in the address, and manfully declaring that the misfortunes of the war could not be charged upon government, he attempted to palliate the losses which the nation had suffered, and to shew that the war had not been so unsuccessful as it was represented, and weakly agreed, for the sake of unanimity, to omit the paragraph relating to the Spanish war ‡. Pulteney availed himself of this concession; and attributed it to fear and conscious guilt. He

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1741 to 1742.

Proceedings.

* Journals.—Chandler.

† Tindal, vol. 20, p. 525.

‡ Tindal, vol. 20, p. 526.—Chandler.

Period VII. 1737 to 1742. made a long and animated speech, full of personal invectives; and anticipated the triumph of his party, by an allusion to the balance of power. He said, that not being in the secrets of government, he was ignorant of its state abroad, but congratulated the house that he had not for many years known it to be so near an equilibrium there as it was then*. He then recapitulated the principal charges which had been urged against Sir Robert Walpole from the beginning of his administration; dwelt very particularly on the mismanagement of the war with Spain, and even carried his reproach so far as to accuse him of being influenced by the enemies of the protestant establishment.

Walpole repelled this intemperate attack with unusual feebleness; and after a short but general justification of the measures of government, concluded with saying, "I am very far from hoping or desiring that the house should be satisfied with a defence like this; I know, by observing the practice of the opponents of the ministry, what fallacies may be concealed in general assertions; and am so far from wishing to evade a more strict inquiry, that if the gentleman who has thus publicly and confidentially accused the ministry, will name a day for inquiring into the state of the nation, I will second his motion†."

Address
amended.

This challenge was accepted; the address, without any mention of the Spanish war, was voted; the motion made by Pulteney to fix a day for considering the state of the nation, was seconded by Walpole, and the 21st of January was appointed for that purpose.

The coolness of the address, and the omission of the clause relating to the war, essentially hurt the minister. It led his interested followers to suspect, that his power was declining; while his friends, who were steady in their attachment to the house of Brunswick, were of opinion, that stronger assurances were due to the king, for the dangers to which he exposed his electoral dominions, the French having already violated the stipulated neutrality, and threatened to take up their winter quarters in Hanover‡.

Proceedings
on elections.

The great points on which the two parties exerted their respective strength, were the decisions on contested elections. Ever since the Aylebury contest, when the house of commons assumed to itself the power of judging finally on the qualifications of the electors, which had been so warmly opposed by Walpole, in the commencement of his parliamentary career, the decision on

* Orlebar to Etough, December 10, 1741.
Correspondence.

† Chandler, vol. 13, p. 47.
‡ Tindal, vol. 20. p. 527.

elections became a mere party business. The merits of the case were seldom considered, and the questions were almost wholly carried by personal or political interests. At the opening of this parliament, there were more contested elections than usual; and as the power of the two contending parties ultimately depended on the decision, every nerve was strained by both sides in favour of their respective friends, the minister had been heard to declare, that there should be no quarter given in elections, and his friends trusted that the decisions would chiefly be in his favour. But these sanguine hopes were frustrated by the activity of opposition, the lukewarmness of many of his real friends, and treachery of his pretended partisans. The opposition made it a principal object to attend on these occasions, and it was esteemed infamous to desert a committee of election*. On the other hand, many of those who supported government often staid away, and not unfrequently voted against the candidates countenanced by the minister.

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The first division which took place was on the Boffiney election, and the party favoured by the minister carried it only by 222 against 216. With this small majority, Walpole acted as he had done in former parliaments. He did not sufficiently adapt himself to the change of circumstances, or consult the temper of the house in the question which was next moved, for choosing a chairman of the committee of elections. This was a point of great consequence, because he possessed considerable power in influencing the decisions referred to the committee. Walpole acted with much imprudence in proposing Giles Earle, one of the lords of the treasury, who had been chairman during the two last parliaments, and was exceedingly unpopular. The opposition supported Dr. Lee, who was much more beloved and respected by all parties than his antagonist. The question was accordingly carried, from personal considerations, against the ministerial candidate, by a majority of 242 against 238. The loss of this question gave a mortal blow to his interest, and redoubled the spirit of his adversaries. The fatal consequences were immediately visible; several unsuccessful candidates, who had depended on his support, withdrew their petitions.

But the fate of the minister was almost decided by the determination on the Westminster election, which was one of the points he most wished to carry, and in which he had flattered himself with the most sanguine hopes. On the petition of the two rejected members, complaining of an undue election and return, the question was carried against the sitting members

Decision of
the Westminster
election.
December 22.

* Dodington to the duke of Argyle, June 18, 1741. Correspondence.

Period VII. by a majority of four, and the election was declared void. A motion for
 1737 to 1742. adjournment was negatived, and the returning officer was ordered to be taken into custody, by a majority of 217 against 215. A second motion to adjourn was also lost, and it was unanimously resolved, that the presence of armed soldiers, at an election of members of parliament, was a high infringement of the liberties of the subject, a manifest violation of the freedom of election, and an open defiance of the laws and constitution.

Recess.

On the 24th, the house adjourned to the 18th of January; and that short interval was employed by the minister in attempts to increase his friends, and to maintain himself in power, but all his efforts were ineffectual.

The state of his own health was a principal cause of his downfall. He had suffered at the latter end of the preceding year from a severe illness*. His memory was no longer so strong, nor his method of transacting business so ready as before. Hence he was incapable of making those exertions which his critical situation rendered necessary; of unmasking his treacherous friends; of exposing his enemies, and of adopting such measures as would have enabled him to act with vigour, or to retire with dignity. During this session he appeared in general absent and thoughtful. He seemed to have lost, in many instances, that contempt of abuse, and command of temper, for which he had been remarkably distinguished: he was either, contrary to his usual custom, silent, or he was irritable and fretful. In one instance he publicly declared, that if he could collect the real sense of the house on the difficult and dangerous situation of affairs, he would support it as a minister in the cabinet. But when he made this declaration, he did not intimate his own opinion; a circumstance which, according to the late earl of Hardwicke, who was present on this occasion, proved the distress and concern under which he laboured†. The loss of the Westminster question ought to have been the signal of his immediate resignation, and many of his friends were of that opinion. But he still appeared anxious to retain his power as long as he was able; and during the recess of parliament, he made an ill-judged application to seduce the prince of Wales from his party, in which his own sagacity and knowledge of mankind ought to have convinced him, that he had no chance of succeeding. Being informed that the members of opposition proposed to renew the motion in parliament, for increasing the establishment of the prince, he prevailed on the king, not without the greatest difficulty, to offer an increase of £. 50,000 to his annual income, and to insinuate hopes

Application
to the prince
of Wales.

* From lord Orford.

† From the late earl of Hardwicke.

that.

that his debts should be paid, provided he would not oppose the measures of government. A message to this purpose was conveyed to the prince by the bishop of Oxford *, at the instance of lord Cholmondeley, and by command of the king. The prince, after due expressions of duty and affection, declared that he considered the message as coming from lord Cholmondeley, and not from the king, and therefore would not listen to any proposition of a similar import, so long as Sir Robert Walpole continued at the head of administration †.

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1741 to 1742.

The resignation of Sir Robert Walpole was now considered as certain both by his friends and enemies; but he had still more mortifications to experience before his fate was ultimately decided.

On the 18th of January the parliament again assembled; and on the 19th the question on the Berwick election was carried, without a division, in favour of Alexander Hugh Campbell, against the candidate who was supported by the court. On the 20th, a bill, brought in by Sir John Rushout and Sir John Hynde Cotton, for taking, examining, and stating the public accounts, passed without

Meeting after
the recess.

* Secker, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury.

† As many erroneous narratives of this transaction have been given to the public, I shall subjoin an account, which I found among the Walpole papers, in the hand-writing of Sir Robert Walpole, and bearing the following endorsement; "An account of what passed between H. R. H. and lord Oxford, January 5, 1741, with the printed letter that passed between the king and prince upon the breach."

"An account of what the bishop of Oxford said to the prince of Wales, from lord Cholmondeley, authorized by his majesty, January 5, 1741."

"That if his royal highness would write a dutiful letter to his majesty, expressing his concern for what was passed, in such a manner as might be consistent with his majesty's honour to accept, representing the uneasy circumstances of his fortune, and referring them to his majesty's goodness, lord Cholmondeley had full and sufficient ground, from his knowledge of his majesty's intentions and dispositions, to assure his royal highness that his majesty would be reconciled to him; and would add 50,000 a year to his present income, and would not require any terms from him, in relation to any of those persons who were in his royal highness's service, counsels, or con-

fidence, nor retain any resentment or displeasure against him.

"To this lord Cholmondeley added, that there was no doubt but that his royal highness's debts would in this case be provided for, in such a manner as upon farther consideration should be found most proper and practicable.

"The answer of his royal highness, January 5, 1741. "His royal highness used strong expressions of duty and affection to his majesty, and answered further to this purpose: That if this had been a message directly from his majesty, it would have been his duty to have written a letter to H. M. on the occasion; but as it was a proposition that came from lord Cholmondeley, in the manner I had mentioned; his answer to lord Cholmondeley was, that he would not hearken to it, so long as Sir Robert Walpole was in power, by whom he conceived himself to have been greatly injured, and to whom he thought the most prudent advice for Sir Robert Walpole himself, and the public, was, that he should retire; and that he, the prince, had before this received intimations of the same nature with those I had now said to him, and desired not to have any more, whilst Sir Robert continued in power."

opposition.

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opposition. On the 21st, Pulteney made the celebrated motion for referring to a secret committee the papers relating to the war, which had been already presented to the house. As this motion involved in it numerous charges against the conduct of the war, stated the necessity of a parliamentary inquiry, and brought on personal invectives against the minister, Sir Robert Walpole took a considerable share in the debate, and was roused to the most animated exertions. In this last effort, he is said by his friends to have exceeded himself, and evinced such a consummate knowledge of foreign affairs as astonished the house. He was also ably defended by Pelham, Winnington, and Sir William Yonge; the question, however, would have been carried but for the influence of lord Hartington, who brought over two Tory members, and by this means, to use the expressions * of Sir Robert Wilmot, saved the country from twenty-four tyrants! The motion was negatived by a majority of only three, in the fullest house known for many years, for 503 members voted.

On this question every exertion was made by opposition, and every art used to secure a majority. The purport of the intended motion was not previously known. The minister was taken unawares; many of his friends had retired; many absented themselves by design; others, who were sent for in the course of the debate, declined, under various pretences, making their appearance, while all his opponents remained at their posts. The efforts were so great on both sides, that members were brought in from the chamber of sickness. Several voted in that condition on the side of opposition; but some who intended to have supported the minister were prevented from appearing at the division. They had been placed in an adjoining apartment belonging to lord Walpole, as auditor of the exchequer, which communicated with the house. The adversaries, aware of this fact, filled the keyhole of the door with dirt and sand, which prevented their admission into the house till the division was over †. On this occasion as general Churchill was sitting next to the prince of Wales, who was in the house of commons to hear the debates, a member was brought in who had lost the use of his limbs. "So," says the prince, "I see you bring in the lame, the halt, and the blind," "Yes," replied the general, "the lame on our side, and the blind on your's ‡." The small majority in favour of government, notwithstanding all the exertions made by the minister, was so sure a signal of his defeat, that a motion to address the king for copies of

* Sir Robert Wilmot to the duke of Devonshire, January 23, 1741. Correspondence.

† Sir Robert Wilmot's letters. Correspondence.

‡ From lord Orford.

the memorials and letters, and other papers sent to and from the king of Prussia, which had been rejected on the 18th of December, by a majority of 24, now passed without a division.

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1741 to 1742.

At length, on the 28th, the opposition finally triumphed. A question on the Chippenham election was carried against the minister, by a majority of one, 237 against 236, and the party gained so considerable an accession, by the desertion or absence of several members of the court party, that the final decision of the Chippenham election was carried against the minister, by a majority of 16, 241 against 225. Walpole seemed to have anticipated this event, and met it with his usual fortitude and cheerfulness. While the tellers were performing their office, he beckoned Sir Edward Bayntun, the member whose return was supported by opposition, to sit near him, spoke to him with great complacency, animadverted on the ingratitude of several individuals who were voting against him, on whom he had conferred great favours, and declared he should never again sit in that house*.

Loss of the
Chippenham
question.

Feb. 2.

On the 3d of February the house adjourned at the king's command, signified by the chancellor, to the 18th.

On the 9th Sir Robert Walpole was created earl of Orford, and on the 11th he resigned.

Created earl
of Orford.

It is asserted by a contemporary historian †, who possessed great means of information, that the minister would have sooner retired, if the state of the nation and of parties had not rendered his continuance in power necessary for the arrangement of a new administration, and for preserving the tranquillity of the country; and that he continued in office solely in compliance with the wishes of his friends. The papers which have been committed to my inspection, and the undoubted information which I have received, enable me to contradict this assertion. He retired unwillingly and slowly: no shipwrecked pilot ever clung to the rudder of a sinking vessel with greater pertinacity than he did to the helm of state, and he did not relinquish his post until he was driven from it by the desertion of his followers and the clamours of the public. Speaker Onslow, who knew him well, declared that he reluctantly quitted his station ‡; and if any doubt still remains, we have the testimony of the minister. "I must inform you," he observes in a letter to the duke of Devonshire, "that the panic was so great among, what shall I call them, my own friends, that *they all* declared that my retiring was become absolutely necessary, as the only means to carry on the public business with honour and success §."

Resigns re-
luctantly.

* From Sir Edward Bayntun.

† Tindal.

‡ Onslow's Remarks. Correspondence, Period IV.

§ Sir Robert Walpole to the duke of Devonshire, February 2, 1741-2. Correspondence.

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It has been also asserted with no less confidence, that the king himself was become weary of a minister, who had so long directed his affairs, who had so often opposed and obstructed his inclination for war, and who was still endeavouring to remove every obstacle which impeded the return of peace. But the same documents enable me to adduce an honourable testimony of the good faith and firmness of George the Second. Although the asperities which time and vexation occasioned in both their tempers, produced a momentary dissatisfaction, yet the king had contracted, by long habit and experience of his capacity for business, a high regard and esteem for his long-tried counsellor. In vain the earl of Wilmington and the duke of Dorset had enforced the necessity of his removal, the resolution of the king was unshaken, and he did not consent to his resignation until the minister himself made it his express desire*.

Affecting interview with the king.

The interview when he took leave of the king was highly affecting. On kneeling down to kiss his hand, the king burst into tears, and the ex-minister was so moved with that instance of regard, that he continued for some time in that posture; and the king was so touched, that he was unable to raise him from the ground. When he at length rose, the king testified his regret for the loss of so faithful a counsellor, expressed his gratitude for his long services, and his hopes of receiving advice on important occasions†.

Affection and regret of his friends.

When his resolution to resign was known, he received more honours than had been paid to him in the plenitude of power. His last levee was more numerously attended than his first. The concourse of persons of all ranks and distinctions was prodigious; and their expressions of affectionate regard and concern extremely moving.

Anecdote of Soame Jenyns.

The ex-minister received many proofs of disinterested attachment from persons to whom he had never shewn any mark of particular attention. Among others, Soame Jenyns gave a testimony of his approbation, thus recorded in the words of his biographer. "Unknown to Sir Robert, and unconnected with him by acquaintance or private regard, he supported him to the utmost of his power, till he retired from his high station, making room for those who soon shewed the loss the nation had sustained by the sad exchange. After he had retired, Soame Jenyns waited upon Sir Robert at Chelsea, when, amongst other things which passed in conversation, lord Orford acknowledged the support he had given him, during the time that he had sitten in parliament, and in expressions of great thankfulness; at the same time

* Lord Hartington to the duke of Devonshire, February 4, 1741-2. Correspondence.

† Lord Hartington to the duke of Devonshire. Correspondence.

declaring

declaring, that had those to whom, during his meridian of power, he had shewn the greatest friendship, and loaded with all the favours he could confer on them, but borne as kind dispositions to him as he had done, who had not been distinguished by any particular regard, he would not then have paid a visit to an ex-minister *."

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The old clergyman of Walsingham, who was master of the first school in which Sir Robert Walpole was instructed, came to Houghton, and told him that he had been his first master, and had predicted that he would be a great man. Being asked why he never had called on him while he was in power, he answered, "I knew that you were surrounded with so many petitioners craving preferment, and that you had done so much for Norfolk people, that I did not wish to intrude." "But," he added in a strain of good-natured simplicity, "I always inquired how Robin went on, and was satisfied with your proceedings †."

* Life of Soame Jenyns, p. 37.

† From Lord Orford.

Period VIII.

1742 to 1745.

PERIOD THE EIGHTH:

From the Resignation of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE to his Death.

1742—1745.

CHAPTER THE SIXTIETH:

1742.

Exertions and Influence of Walpole.—Negotiations with Pulteney for the Arrangement of a new Administration.—Jealousies and Divisions of Opposition.—Meeting at the Fountain Tavern.—Interference of the Prince of Wales.—Parliamentary Inquiry into the Conduct of the Ex-minister.—Secret Committee. Indemnity Bill.—Passes the Commons.—Rejected by the Lords.—Pulteney created Earl of Bath.—His Unpopularity.—Accusations against him—Examined and refuted.

Views of
Walpole.

THE minister, in retiring, had three great objects in view. 1st. To disunite the heterogeneous parties which composed the opposition. 2d. To form an administration on the Whig basis. 3d. To save himself from a public prosecution.

To divide
his oppo-
nents.

If the first point was effected, the others would necessarily follow. To divide the opposition, and weaken a combination which would else have been fatal to him, it became necessary to lure the duke of Argyle and the Tories, to conciliate the prince of Wales, and to detach Pulteney, who then headed the Whigs in opposition, from the Tories. To effect these views, he had recourse to the grand engine of political jealousy. He made such

such advances to the Tories as inspired them with fallacious hopes and unfounded notions of their own importance*, and filled the Whigs in opposition with apprehensions of being excluded from the spoils. Having succeeded in this attempt, he advised the king to form a Whig administration, and suggested the propriety of applying to Pulteney. One of the greatest difficulties under which he laboured in the course of this political transaction, was to conquer the king's repugnance to Pulteney, which at this period seemed almost insuperable, and to persuade his majesty to commence the negotiation, and acquiesce in Pulteney's expected demand of a peerage. Having at length overcome the king's pertinacious inveteracy, he said to his son Horace, "I have set the king upon him," and at another time, in the farther progress of the king's compliance, he triumphantly said, making at the same time a motion with his hand as if he was locking a door, "I have turned the key of the closet upon him †."

When the negotiation with Pulteney first commenced, neither the documents in my possession, or any oral information, have enabled me to ascertain; but it is probable that indirect overtures had been made some time before the recess.

Negotiation
with Pulteney.

Hints had been thrown out to Carteret, from some person in the king's confidence, that proposals would be made to Pulteney, as the leader of the house of commons; but a fortnight elapsed after this communication had been made, before any step was taken. At length a message came from the duke of Newcastle, requesting Pulteney to meet him privately at his secretary, Mr. Stone's, house at Whitehall. Pulteney returned for answer, that in the present juncture he could not comply with this request without giving umbrage to his friends. He was under the necessity of declining a private meeting, but added, that he had no objection to receive his grace publicly at his own house. A few days afterwards, he received a note from the duke of Newcastle, importing, that he and the lord chancellor, having a message from the king, would wait upon him.

The meeting took place in the forenoon, between the duke of Newcastle and the chancellor on one side, and Pulteney and Carteret, whose presence he had desired as his confidential friend, on the other.

First conference with Newcastle.

Newcastle opened the conference by saying; that the king being convinced that Sir Robert Walpole was no longer supported by a majority in the house

* See Defence of the People, p. 81.—This pamphlet was written by Ralph, who received his information from Dodington, then in union with the duke of Argyle.

† From lord Orford.

Period VIII. 1742 to 1745. of commons, had commanded them to offer the places which that minister possessed to Mr. Pulteney, with the power of forming his own administration, on the sole condition that Sir Robert Walpole should not be prosecuted. To this proposal Pulteney replied, that if that condition was to be made the foundation of the treaty, he never would comply with it; "and even," he concluded, "should my inclination induce me to accede to these terms, yet it might not be in my power to fulfil my engagement; the heads of parties being like the heads of snakes, which are carried on by their tails. For my part, he added, I will be no screen; but if the king should be pleased to express a desire to open any treaty, or to hold any conversation with me, I will pay my duty at St. James's, though I have not been at court for many years; but I will not come privately, but publicly and at noon day, in order to prevent all jealousy and suspicion *." Before they parted, some negus was brought in, and the duke of Newcastle drank, "Here is to our happier meeting." Pulteney replied, in a quotation from Shakespeare's Julius Cæsar,

"If we do meet again, why we shall smile,

"If not, why then this meeting was well made."

Expectations
of the Tories.

Meanwhile a prodigious ferment appeared throughout the nation. The Tories and Jacobites were equally irritated against the minister, and the popular clamours for reform, were no less violent than discordant. A contemporary author has well described the vehement and contradictory views of the heterogeneous parties which composed the opposition. "Among those who thought themselves the most moderate, no two men agreed upon what was necessary. Some thinking that all security lay in a good place bill, about the degree and extent of which they likewise differed. Some in a pension bill, which others more justly thought would signify nothing. Some in a law for triennial parliaments, which all who did not delight in riot or in the prospect of corruption, thought both dangerous and dubious. Some for annual parliaments, which others thought too frequent. Some for justice on the minister. Others not for sanguinary views. Some for a reduction of the civil list, which others thought unjust to be taken away, having been legally given. Some for the sale of all employments. Others for allowing a few. Some for taking the disposition of them from the crown, which others thought anti-constitutional. Some for allowing them to subsist, but to be

* Bishop Newton.

given only to those who were not in parliament, that is, among themselves. Some to allow them to be given for life. Some for making the army independent. Others for no regular troops at all *."

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1742.

To oppose this torrent of reform, the necessity of gaining Pulteney became more and more urgent. Though it should be admitted that personal pique and party resentment were among the motives which influenced his opposition, yet he was known to be a friend to the constitution, a sound Whig, and a warm partisan to the protestant establishment, and the largeness of his property would induce him to obstruct all measures which might tend to create confusion, or perplex government.

The only method to conciliate him was, in appearance, to submit entirely to his demands, to prevail on him to make as few changes as possible, to introduce few obnoxious persons, and to trust the safety of Walpole to future exigencies.

This scheme was managed with so much address, that Pulteney, in forming an administration, the great outlines of which were traced by Walpole, conceived that he was dictating his own terms. It was particularly owing to his influence that Newcastle retained his situation of secretary of state, and that Harrington, who was compelled to make way for Carteret, obtained the presidentship of the council; many of his most confidential friends were also continued in their posts.

Walpole's influence.

Soon after the first conference with Newcastle, the king sent Pulteney a private message, requesting that if he did not chuse to place himself at the head of the treasury, he would let lord Wilmington *slide* into it, in which Pulteney acquiesced. Carteret, who coveted that post, expressing dissatisfaction at the arrangement, Pulteney declared that he would break his own resolution, and take the place himself, if Carteret would not consent to the appointment of Wilmington. "You," he added, "must be secretary of state, as the fittest person to direct foreign affairs †."

In the course of a few days another conference was held at the same place, by the same persons. Newcastle said, that he was now commissioned by the king to make the former offers, without insisting on the condition of not prosecuting the minister; and he added, that the king only requested that, if any prosecution was commenced against Sir Robert Walpole, he would not inflame it, though he might not chuse to oppose it. Pulteney replied, that he was not a *man of blood*; that in all his expressions importing a resolution to

Pulteney's second conference.

* Faction Detected, p. 69.

† From the bishop of Salisbury.

pursue

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1742 to 1745.

purfue the minifter to deftruction, he meant only the deftruction of his power, but not of his perfon. He could not undertake to fay what was proper to be done; he muft take the advice of his friends; though he was free to own, that according to his opinion fome parliamentary cenfure at leaft ought to be inflicted for fo many years of mal-adminiftration. Newcastle * then obferved, "the king trusts you will not diftrefs the government by making too many changes in the midft of a feflion of parliament, and that you and your friends will be fatisfied with the removal of Sir Robert Walpole and a few others." Pulteney replied, that he was far from defiring to perplex government, or to make too many changes at once, which would throw all things into confufion, he did not infift on a total change; and he had no objection to the duke of Newcastle or the lord chancellor, but what he infifted upon, he added, was an alteration of meafures as well as men: He only required that fome obnoxious perfons fhould be difmiffed; that the main forts of government fhould be delivered into the hands of his party; a majority in the cabinet council, the nomination of a fecretary of ftate for Scotland, and of the boards of treafury and admiralty. After fome refiftance, thefe points being finally agreed to, Newcastle fupposed that in arranging the new adminiftration, he would place himfelf at the head of the treafury, and declared that it was the earneft and repeated defire of the king. "As the difpofition of places is in my hands," replied Pulteney, "I will accept none myfelf; I have fo repeatedly declared my refolution on that head, and I will not now contradict myfelf:" He then named the earl of Wilmington firft lord of the treafury; Sandys chancellor of the exchequer; Carteret fecretary of ftate; Sir John Ruffhout, Gibbon, and Waller, lords of the treafury; a new board of admiralty, including Sir John Hynde Cotton; and the marquis of Tweeddale fecretary of ftate for Scotland. For himfelf he demanded only a peerage, and a feat in the cabinet. Before they parted, Pulteney declared that he was under fuch engagements with the duke of Argyle, that he muft acquaint him with all which had paffed; and added, that he fhould not oblige him to fecrecy, but leave him at liberty to inform lord Chefterfield or lord Cobham, or any of his friends. Newcastle did not confent to this without unwillingnefs, and the meeting ended †.

* Bifhop Newton.

† The account of this negotiation with Pulteney, and the fubfequent tranfactions, are principally derived from the Correspondence, Period VII.—From Communications by the bifhop of Salifbury.—Life of bifhop Newton,

who has related the whole tranfaction from the authority of Pulteney, though not without fome flight errors, which I have been enabled to rectify from notes and information, kindly fupplied by the bifhop of Salifbury.

These

These negotiations created great jealousies, and excited the resentment of those who were not admitted to the conferences. Two parties, at a very early period of this business, were forming against the arrangements made by Pulteney, consisting of the great body of the Tories, headed by Argyle, which party was joined by the Jacobites, and the other composed of those Whigs who were not likely to be comprised in the new arrangements. Chesterfield was disappointed that he was not made secretary of state; Waller was irritated at not being chancellor of the exchequer, and thought the situation of a lord of the treasury beneath his acceptance. Cobham, though restored to a regiment, and appointed a member of the cabinet, aspired to a far greater share of power; and the Grenvilles, Lyttleton, Pitt, and Dodington, were highly dissatisfied that they had no share in the new administration.

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1742.

Jealousies.

In the midst of this growing dissatisfaction, a great point was gained by conciliating the prince of Wales. The arrangement with Pulteney was made without the knowledge of the prince, to whom it was not communicated before the 2d of February. He received the information with due respect *, and appeared satisfied with the result. On the 6th he granted a private audience to Sir Robert Walpole, and promised his protection against any attacks upon his life or fortune.

Prince of
Wales con-
ciliated.

While the posts remained unfilled, and the members of the opposition conceived hopes that an arrangement might take place in their favour, the great body continued apparently united; but the moment that suspicions began to be formed of a separate negotiation, and that the places of secretary of state, and chancellor of the exchequer, were disposed of, without the general concurrence, murmurs and discontents succeeded, and a schism, which Percival † calls, "the death of the late opposition," took place on the 11th of February, when the meeting was held at the Fountain Tavern.

It consisted of not less than three hundred members of both houses of parliament. The duke of Argyle, as we are informed by a person who was present ‡, and took an active share on the side of Pulteney, expatiated, with great solemnity of speech and gesture, on the dangerous situation to which the country had been reduced by the late administration of Sir Robert Walpole, and on the glorious and steady opposition which had been made to his measures; he said, "happily, at length honest endeavours and the just spirit of the people have brought us in sight of the long wished for haven, and as all parties have contributed to forward this important

Meeting at
the Fountain
Tavern.
Feb. 11.
Speech of
Argyle.

* Sir Robert Walpole to the duke of Devonshire, Feb. 2. 1742. Correspondence.

† Afterwards earl of Egmont, author of

Faction Detected, one of the best political pamphlets ever written. See p. 41.

‡ Lord Percival.—Faction Detected.

Period VIII. point, it is just that all denominations of men should receive an equal
 1742 to 1745. reward of their virtue. If a proper use is made of this fortunate conjuncture, this reward may be obtained. We have a right to expect the total rout of all those who formed any part of the ministerial junto; and such a measure would make room for all."

After sarcastically observing, in allusion to Pulteney, that a grain of honesty was worth a cart load of gold *, he proceeded: "But have we not much reason to fear that this use will not be made of the happy opportunity; that a few men, without any communication of their proceedings to this assembly, have arrogated to themselves the exclusive right of nomination, and from their manner we have sufficient cause to apprehend that they do not intend the general advantage. They have now been eight days engaged in this business, and if we are to judge from the few offices they have already bestowed, they may justly be accused of not acting with that vigour which the whole people have a right to expect. The choice of those already preferred cannot but supply great matter of jealousy; for as this choice has principally fallen upon the Whigs, it is an ill omen to the Tories: If they are not to be provided for, the happy effects of the coalition will be destroyed; and the odious distinction of party will be again revived, to the great prejudice of the nation. It is therefore highly necessary to continue closely united, and to persevere with the same vehemence as ever, till the Tories obtain justice, and the administration is founded upon the *broad bottom* of both parties."

Pulteney's
 reply.

To these accusations Pulteney retorted with no less bitterness: He lamented the severe treatment which he and his co-adjutors had incurred in return for their services, and for their share in driving the late minister from the helm, to be thus held forth and publicly charged in the face of the world, with things of which no man durst venture to accuse them in private; to be loaded with unjust suspicions and imaginary crimes, which though without foundation, would be easily believed in the present temper of the nation. "We deserve," he added, "a very different usage for the integrity with which we have hitherto proceeded, and by which we are determined to proceed. In answer to the imputation, that we have taken the management of the negotiation into our hands, let us reply, that overtures having been made to us, it was our duty, (as it would have been the duty of every man, to whom such overtures had been made,) to employ all our abilities and endeavours to form a happy settlement, after the long divisions with which this

* Bishop Newton.

country

country has been so long unhappily rent, and which could not longer subsist without ruining the interest of the nation abroad, and incurring the danger of fatal disturbances at home. The superficial vulgar might indeed conceive that it would have been more equitable to refer the settlement to the decision of the whole party; but surely no man of tolerable understanding and experience can cherish an idea so impracticable and absurd. Government is not yet reduced to surrender at discretion, especially to an enemy who has declared publicly that they would give no quarter; government neither can, will, nor ought to be taken by storm; and it behoves gentlemen to consider the inevitable consequences of such an attempt. The great points in agitation were, to change the minister, and change the measures; the one is already effected, and we will engage to perform the other.

“As to the distribution of employments, there is neither justice, decency, duty, or moderation, in dictating to the king, how to dispose of every preferment in the state. His majesty has shewed a disposition to comply with the desires of his people in the most effectual manner; he has already supplied the principal ministerial posts with men, who have hitherto enjoyed the confidence of the people, and cannot yet have forfeited their good opinion, because, though nominated, they have none of them yet done any single act of office. As to the changes already made, they are as numerous as the importance of the matter, and the nature of the thing can possibly admit so soon, and it would have been more to the credit of the party, if their patience had extended a little longer than the few days, that have passed since the time of their adjournment. As to the partial distribution of employments to the Whigs, as far as our interest shall hereafter extend, we will use it faithfully to the king and our country, by recommending such persons, whose principles have been misrepresented, and who are true to his family, let their appellations be what they will. But it must be a work of some time, to remove suspicions inculcated long, and long credited, with regard to a denomination of men, who have formerly been thought not heartily attached to the interest of the prince upon the throne; some instances of this intention, have been already given in the late removals, and there will be many more, but it must depend upon the prudent conduct of the Tories themselves, wholly to abolish these unhappy distinctions of party.” He concluded by requesting them to consider how false a step they had already made, and that this passionate and groundless division, would infallibly give new courage to the party they had just subdued; that it discovered a weak-

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Increasing
discontents.

Composed by
the prince.

ness, of which advantage would be certainly taken ; that it must inevitably lessen the power of those who were employed, and, if persisted in, would in a great measure prevent the success of their views, both for the public and their friends *.

When the contest was in reality for power, and only in appearance for the public good, it is not to be supposed that arguments on either side drawn from prudential, disinterested, and patriotic motives, could have the smallest weight. The parties separated with the same virulence as they had met, and only waited for an open rupture, until all the places were disposed of; each flattering himself that he might be included in the proposed arrangement †.

The resentment of the disaffected patriots was still farther aggravated, by the formation of the new treasury board ‡, announced on the 16th of February, in which only one Tory was included.

With a view to allay these jealousies, the prince of Wales proposed a meeting to be held in his presence, of the chief leaders of the former opposition, particularly Argyle, Chesterfield, Cobham, Gower, and Bathurst. Pulteney came, accompanied by Scarborough, prepared to oppose or to conciliate. Violent accusations were severally levelled against him; it was urged that the change of administration ought to be total; that the intended alterations were not sufficient; too many of the late minister's friends would remain in power; Sir Robert Walpole would still act behind the curtain, and direct the whole machine of government §. Pulteney replied, that these accusations were groundless; for even upon a supposition that the ex-minister should still continue to be a greater personal favourite with the king than any of them, or than all of them together, yet it would not be in his power to distress them, provided they remained united among themselves. "Nothing," he added, "but our own dissensions can hurt us; we have the staff in our own hands, and the changes now to be made, will enable us to effect farther alterations at the end of the session. I have stipulated that the duke of Argyle, lord

* Faction Detected, p. 42.

† To this meeting at the Fountain Tavern, his usual wit and satire, in his ode against the Sir Charles Hanbury Williams alludes, with earl of Bath, called The Statesman.

"Then enlarge on his cunning and wit:

"Say, how he harangu'd at the Fountain;

"Say, how the old patriots were bit,

"And a mouse was produc'd by a mountain."

‡ Lord Wilmington, Sandys, Sir John Rushout, Philip Gibbon, and George Compton.

§ Bishop Newton, p. 31.

Cobham,

Cobham, lord Gower, the marquis of Tweeddale, the earl of Winchelsea, lord Carteret, and myself, shall be members of the cabinet council, and we shall form so great a majority, that the whole power will be in our hands. We shall besides command the whole boards of treasury and admiralty, and have the appointment of several other considerable places. What then have we to fear? Should we attempt a total change at this period, disorder and confusion must ensue. By the pledges we possess at present, we have ample security for future regulations, and with such a power in our hands, we may command any future alterations."

The prince declared himself satisfied with these reasons; and it was unanimously agreed, they should all go to court together. Thus the authority of the prince, and the expectations of the Tories, that Sir John Hynde Cotton would, according to promise, be appointed one of the lords of the admiralty, prevented an open rupture.

On the 7th the prince, whose establishment had been increased to £.100,000 a year, and who was farther gratified with a promise of seats at the admiralty board for lord Baltimore and lord Archibald Hamilton, paid his personal respects to the king, and on the 18th, the whole party* who had formed the opposition to the late minister, made their appearance at court. This event was hailed by the Tories as the beginning of a new æra: "Upon this memorable day," observes the author of the Defence of the People, "his majesty for the first time appeared to be the king of ALL HIS PEOPLE, and had the happiness and glory to see himself in the midst of a more illustrious circle than had ever surrounded any of our sovereigns since queen Elizabeth began to narrow the bottom of government, by persecuting the Puritans †."

On the same day the two houses met, and the writs for the members appointed to the new board of treasury were issued. The Tories and disaffected Whigs did not, however, yet venture to begin a new opposition. Argyle accepted the office of master-general of the ordnance, and a regiment of horse of which he had been dispossessed. No opposition was made to the motion on the 22d for ordering that a million should be taken from the sinking fund, towards raising a supply, a mode of proceeding for which they had reprobated Walpole with unabating virulence. When the house resolved itself into a committee of supply, Philips, a violent Tory member, moved to defer the committee for the purpose of taking into consideration

Parliamentary proceedings.

* Defence of the People.

† Ibid, p. 71.

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the state of the nation, but he was only feebly supported: Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, no less vehement on the same side of the question, was the only member who spoke in favour of the motion, and it was dropped without a division*.

At length the new board of admiralty was declared †, and Sir John Hynde Cotton was not included. As all the places were now disposed of, and all expectations were annihilated, the Tories and disaffected Whigs openly appeared in battle array against the new ministry. The duke of Argyle, disgusted that the marquis of Tweeddale was appointed secretary of state for Scotland, and dissatisfied that a large body of his needy descendants were not provided for, resigned. The prince of Wales soon withdrew his support, and his most confidential servants, particularly Pitt and Lyttleton, violently opposed the new administration.

New opposition.

In this situation of parties, the Tories and disaffected Whigs opposed the re-election of the members who had accepted the places at the board of admiralty. Lord Baltimore was opposed in Surry by the duke of Bedford; Dr. Lee was thrown out at Breachley, by the interest of the duke of Bridgewater; lord Limerick, who was to have been appointed secretary at war, in the place of Sir William Yonge, could not venture to vacate his seat for Tavistock, on the certainty of not being re-chosen, as it was a borough belonging to the duke of Bedford. He obtained a reversion of the place of king's remembrancer in Ireland; and Sir William Yonge, the adherent of Sir Robert Walpole, was permitted to continue secretary at war.

Motion against lord Orford.

Orford had now succeeded in dividing opposition, and forming an administration on a Whig basis. The firm phalanx of opposition was disunited; Pulteney was duped and deceived by those with whom he had negotiated, and deserted even by those whom he had promoted. While he was confined by the sickness and death of his daughter, the other leaders of the opposition in the house of commons, being eager to prove that they could carry a measure without his assistance, lord Limerick moved, on the 9th of March, for a secret committee, for inquiring into the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, during the last twenty years. Winchelsea and Carteret, whom Pulteney had particularly favoured, intimated to his friends, without his authority, that it would be agreeable to him if they would not attend; accordingly, the motion being made during his absence, while Sandys

Negatived.

* Chandler.

† The earl of Winchelsea, John Cockburne,

lord Archibald Hamilton, lord Baltimore, Philip Cavendish, Dr. Lee, John M. Trevor.

was gone to Worcester to be elected, was lost by a majority of only 2, 244 against 242.

Pulteney, in several audiences, urged repeatedly to the king, that the Tories were by no means Jacobites, and to use them as Jacobites, was the ready way to make them so; that two-thirds of the nation were Tories, and several of them men of large estates. He even ventured to ask the king why he made himself only the head of a party, when he might be king of the whole nation! He himself, he added, was a Whig, his most intimate friends were Whigs. He was of opinion, that the trunk of the tree in the government should be formed of Whigs, but that the Tories might be inoculated or engrafted upon it. The Tories were not masters of calculation, or proficient in the knowledge of languages, and therefore could not nor did not expect the first situations under government: that by conferring a few places at court on some of the most considerable, by constituting others lord lieutenants of the counties, and by distributing some other marks of royal favour, he would disarm the whole party, and prevent their uniting in opposition to government. By this conduct, the king might abolish all distinctions of parties, and the remainder of his reign might be peaceable and glorious*. But Pulteney was now talking in vain; all his remonstrances were ineffectual; he was no longer the soul of a great party, and he had no longer that personal credit and power which he had enjoyed from that situation.

The third great object which Orford had to effect, was his own security, which the temper of parliament, and the popular outcry against him, rendered extremely difficult. But the support of the king, the opposition of the house of peers, the goodness of his cause, and the steady zeal of his friends, finally prevailed: the good sense of the nation was not long to be deluded by vague accusations of pretended patriots.

It is fortunate, however, for the honour of Sir Robert Walpole, that the inquiry into his administration took place; as the ordeal which he underwent on this occasion, was such as could have been passed by few ministers, who had, during so long a period, directed the helm of government in a great commercial country, divided into parties, and torn by factions.

The motion of lord Limerick to institute an inquiry into the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole, during the last twenty years, had been thrown out, and the loss of the question had been principally owing to the absence of Pulteney, and to the intimation that he was averse to it. With a

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1742.

Pulteney remonstrates with the king.

Decline of his credit.

Parliamentary inquiry into Walpole's conduct.

Motion for a secret committee.

* Bishop Newton.

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view to contradict these reports, which he considered as injurious to his reputation, as if he was desirous of checking an inquiry, lord Limerick, at his request, made a second motion to appoint a secret committee of inquiry into the conduct of the earl of Orford, during the last ten years of his being first commissioner of the treasury, and chancellor and under treasurer of his majesty's exchequer.

It will be unnecessary to enter into a detail of the arguments which were urged on both sides, as well on this as on the former occasion, in which the late minister was as vigorously attacked and ably defended, and in which his third son, Horace Walpole, testified his filial affection, by an animated and manly speech against the motion.

It is sufficient to observe, that to accuse a minister of any specific acts of mal-administration, is the privilege of our well-regulated constitution, which no one but a friend to a despotic government, could wish to be removed; but to constitute a *general* inquiry into the conduct of a minister for so long a term as ten years, founded on popular clamours and vague suspicions, without particularizing any act of guilt, and especially for measures which had been legally sanctioned by parliament, seemed as unjust as it was unconstitutional. It required all the powers of Pulteney, who is said to have still preserved "a miraculous influence in the house of commons *," and all the eloquence of Pitt, who eminently distinguished himself in both these debates, to palliate or justify such a flagrant abuse of parliamentary interference; and it demanded all the accumulated weight of the Tories and disaffected Whigs, to carry it through the house, by a majority of only seven, 252 against 245.

Committee
appointed.

The motion having passed, a committee of secrecy, consisting of twenty-one members, was appointed, and empowered to examine, in the most solemn manner, such persons as they thought proper on the subject matter of their inquiry. Of the twenty-one members † appointed by ballot, all except two were the uniform opponents of the late minister. The disaffected Whigs accused the Tories of having acted falsely in permitting the introduction of Sir Henry Lydal and Talbot, with a view to perplex the business, while the Tories on their side accused Sandys of being rather a spy than an associate, and of rather embarrassing than forwarding the business ‡.

* Defence of the People, or Answer to Faction Detected.

† Sir John St. Aubin, Samuel Sandys, Sir John Rushout, George Compton, lord Quarendon, William Noel, Sir John Barnard, lord Limerick, lord Cornbury, Nicholas Fazakerly,

Henry Furness, lord Granard, Cholmondeley Turner, Edmund Waller, William Pitt, Thomas Prowse, William Bowles, Edward Hooper, Sir John Strange, Sir Henry Lydal, and John Talbot. Chandler.

‡ Defence of the People, p. 109.

The

The earl of Orford, however, seems to have formed a more judicious opinion of this circumstance. For being congratulated that two of his friends were appointed members of the secret committee, he replied, "They will become so zealous for the honour of the committee, that they will no longer pay sufficient regard to *mine* *."

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Armed with such extensive powers, the committee of secrecy commenced their operations, by choosing lord Limerick chairman. They applied with indefatigable diligence to the inspection of the treasury books and papers, they examined many persons who were supposed to have been the private agents of Sir Robert Walpole, in his schemes of corruption, bribery, and dilapidation of the public revenue.

Their proceedings.

The expectations of the nation were raised to the greatest height; the measures of the minister who had been held forth as a public delinquent, as having squandered and appropriated the public money, were brought before a tribunal, consisting of persons who were both willing and able to trace his misconduct, and discover his enormities. It was naturally expected that in so long an administration, big with difficulties, and teeming with internal troubles, numerous instances of corrupt influence and notorious malversation would have been discovered; and that his opponents had some foundation for the crimes which they had laid to his charge. But it soon appeared that they had advanced accusations which they could not prove; and that the charges urged with such confidence in the forcible language of Pitt, could not be authenticated. "I fear not to declare," observed that eminent orator, with all the baneful spirit of party, "that I expect, in consequence of such inquiry, to find, that our treasure has been exhausted, not to humble our enemies, or to obviate domestic insurrections, not to support our allies, or to suppress our factions; but for purposes which no man who loves his country can think of without indignation, the purchase of votes, the bribing of boroughs, the enriching of hirelings, the multiplying of dependents, and the corruption of parliaments †."

The want of sufficient proofs, drawn from authentic papers and voluntary evidence, reduced the committee to so great dilemma, that for the purpose of proving those enormities, which they deemed had been committed, they had recourse to a very extraordinary and unprecedented proposition. For the discoveries which they were able to make were inconsiderable, when compared with the atrociousness of the charges, and they attributed

* From lord Orford.

† Chandler's Debates.

the

Period VIII. the inefficacy of their inquiries to the arts and obstinacy of the ex-minister's
 1742 to 1745. friends and dependents.

It is an established maxim in all governments, that secret service money must always be employed for the public advantage, and the disposal of that money is, in limited governments like our's, always confided to the king, under the direction and controul of his ministers, who are responsible to parliament. Among the ministers, the first lord of the treasury, as having the chief direction of the finances, is principally entrusted with the distribution.

With a view to prove Sir Robert Walpole guilty of abusing or mismanaging this part of the public revenue, they examined some of the inferior agents who must always be employed in that species of negotiation. The sum of £.95,000, had passed through the hands of Paxton, solicitor to the treasury. Being called upon to give an account of that money, he was first examined about £.500, which had been paid to one Boteler in 1735, for the purpose of carrying his election for the borough of Wendover. Paxton being repeatedly asked if he had advanced any money on that account, repeatedly refused to answer that question, as it might tend to accuse himself. For this species of contumacy, he was committed to Newgate, by an order of the house. Gwyn Vaughan being examined by the committee, in regard to a practice with which the late minister was charged, of obliging a possessor of a place to pay a certain sum from the profits, to a person recommended by government, followed the example of Paxton, and declined making any reply, as it might affect himself.

Scrope, secretary to the treasury, and member of the house of commons, being next examined in regard to the disposal of £.1,052,211, which had, within the term of ten years, been traced into his and Sir Robert Walpole's hands, declined taking the oath of discovery, avowing that he could not, consistently with his conscience, take a general oath, while particular queries might arise, which he was determined not to answer, and he added, that he could reply to no interrogation, concerning secret service money, without the permission of the king. On being again examined, he acquainted the committee, "that he had consulted the ablest lawyers and divines, and that they had made his scruples stronger; that he did not do it to obstruct the committee, but he could not, as an honest man, and with a safe conscience, take the oath. That he had laid his case before the king, and was authorised to say, that the disposal of money, issued for secret service, by the nature of it, requires the utmost secrecy, and is accountable to his majesty only; and therefore his majesty could not permit him to disclose any thing on the subject. That he hoped he should not incur the displeasure of the committee,

for

for if the oath was confined, he was ready to be examined. Upon this answer, he was no further pressed*."

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Several others in the same manner refusing to answer, the committee were perplexed, and confounded between their strong inclination to convict, and the impossibility of effecting their purpose by the common mode of legal or parliamentary proceeding.

They therefore published their celebrated report †, and moved in the house of commons, for a bill, "to indemnify such persons, as should upon examination, make discoveries, touching the disposition of offices, or any payment or agreement in respect thereof, or concerning other matters belonging to the conduct of Robert earl of Orford ‡."

Bill of indemnity.

Many words are not required to shew the fatal tendency of a bill, calculated to suborn witnesses, to multiply accusations, to encourage villains to accuse a person who was innocent, or at least, should be deemed innocent until he was proved guilty, to bribe men to give evidence to save their own lives and estates; a bill in which the inquiry was uncertain, and the indemnity as uncertain as the discovery which the witnesses might make. For it did not lay down any specific object of which the earl of Orford was supposed guilty, it did not offer the payment of a certain sum of money, or the pardon of any particular crime; but the persons who gave evidence were to be indemnified for *all* the sums which they might lose, and receive a pardon for *all* the crimes which they might disclose, in giving evidence against the earl of Orford. It was holding up the ex-minister as a public felon, and converting the house of commons into a tribunal of blood §.

Although the passing of this inquisition bill casts a severe reflection on the house of commons, yet it affords some consolation, that it was not carried without a considerable struggle, and by a majority of only twelve, 228 against 216.

Passes the commons.

The debates in the house of commons, on this important occasion, have

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 543. Chandler.

† See the next chapter.

‡ Tindal, vol. 20, p. 544.

§ The words of the bill are a sufficient justification of these censures, "That all persons who shall truly and faithfully disclose and discover, to the best of their knowledge, remembrance, and belief, all such matters and things, as they shall be examined unto, touching or concerning the said inquiry and relative thereunto, shall be, and are thereby indemnified and

discharged, of and from all forfeitures, penalties, punishments, disabilities, and incapacities which they shall or may incur, or become subject to, for or by reason or means of any matter or thing, which they shall so truly and faithfully discover and make known, touching or concerning the said inquiry, and relative thereunto; viz. of all matters relating to the conduct of the earl of Orford, for ten years last past."

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never been given to the public ; but those which took place when it was discussed in the house of peers are recorded in the contemporary publications. The reader may indulge his curiosity, in the perusal of this debate, which affords a striking instance of the baneful influence of party spirit *.

He will be shocked at the insinuation of Bathurst, as calculated for the meridian of despotism, "*that the introduction of new methods of prosecution is the natural consequence of new schemes of villany, and new schemes of evasion.*" But he will turn with horror from the malignant comparison of Chesterfield, who endeavoured to prove, that *such an indemnity was not a new thing in our constitution, because rewards were daily offered to highwaymen and murderers, for the discovery of their accomplices.*

He will read, however, with pleasure, the manly remark of lord chancellor Hardwicke, "that names will not change the nature of the things to which they are applied." "The bill is calculated," he said, "to make a defence impossible, to deprive innocence of its guard, and to let loose oppression and perjury upon the world. It is a bill to dazzle the wicked with a prospect of security, and to incite them to purchase an indemnity for one crime, by the perpetration of another. It is a bill to confound the notions of right and wrong, to violate the essence of our constitution, and to leave us without any certain security for our property, or rule for our actions †."

Rejected by
the lords.

It reflects the highest honour on the house of lords, that the bill was rejected by a much larger majority than even the place and pension bills ‡, which affords a sufficient answer to those who confidently assert that its rejection was wholly owing to the influence of the crown, in consequence of a compromise with Pulteney, and that the prosecution was only a collusion. I can trace no signs of such a compromise ; I observe the secret committee eager to prove the minister culpable. I observe Sandys, and the members of the new administration, as violent in their unqualified assertions of his guilt, as the Tories and disaffected Whigs, who were excluded by the arrangement of Pulteney. If I compare the 109 peers, who voted against the bill, with the 57 who voted for it, I find the same proportion of men of property, independence, and probity in the one, as in the other list ; and on an impartial review of the subject, I cannot consider their rejection of this bill, in any other light than as an act of justice, which did not construe suspicion into a

* Gentleman's and London Magazines.—
Lords' Debates.

† Lords' Debates, vol. 8. p. 167.

‡ Place Bill, - 81 against 52 majority 29.
Pension Bill, 76 - - 46 - - 30.
Indemnity Bill, 109 - - 57 - - 52.
Lords' Debates.

proof

proof of guilt, which set bounds to party spirit and Jacobite prosecution; and I look up with reverence to that branch of our constitution, which more than once has saved this country from the overgrown prerogative of the crown, and from the violence of popular frenzy.

The rejection of the indemnity bill by the house of peers, was received with such dissatisfaction by the inveterate enemies of the ex-minister, that lord Strange moved in the house of commons, "That the lords refusing to concur with the commons of Great Britain, in an indemnification necessary to the effectual carrying on the inquiry, now depending in parliament, was an obstruction to justice, and might prove fatal to the liberties of this nation *." This violent motion was opposed, not only by the friends of the late minister, but even by Pulteney, and the new members of the administration, and by some of the Tories, who declared, that although they wished the bill had passed, yet they could not agree to a resolution which would create a breach between the two houses: it was accordingly thrown out by a majority of 52.

The day on which parliament was prorogued, Pulteney was called to the house of peers, by the title of earl of Bath.

Walpole had now the pleasure, if it be any pleasure to a great mind, to see the celebrated commoner, who had driven him from the helm, as much exposed to obloquy, as he himself had ever been in the plenitude of his power and unpopularity. He saw him lampooned in ballads replete with wit, reviled both by ministerial and opposition writers, his influence sunk so low, that he, who for a few days possessed the whole authority of the crown, was now unable to command for a friend a cornetcy of dragoons, or a lieutenancy of the navy †. In fact, the credit of Pulteney was so much reduced, that on his remonstrating to the duke of Newcastle, that the king had broken his promise of appointing Sir John Hynde Cotton one of the lords

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Pulteney created earl of Bath.

His unpopularity.

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 546. Chandler.

† To this decline of his influence, Sir Charles H. Williams alludes in one of his satirical ballads:

"Great earl of Bath, your reign is o'er;
The Tories trust your word no more,
The Whigs no longer fear ye;
Your gates are seldom now unbarr'd,
No crowds of coaches fill your yard,
And scarce a soul comes near ye.

"Few now aspire at your good graces,
Scarce any sue to you for places,

Or come with their petition,
To tell how well they have deserv'd,
How long, how steadily they starv'd
For you in opposition:

"Expect to see that tribe no more,
Since all mankind perceive that pow'r
Is lodg'd in other hands.

Sooner to Carteret now they'll go,
Or ev'n (though that's excessive low)
To Wilmington and Sands."

Williams's Poems, p. 43.

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Unjustly ac-
cused.

of the admiralty; Newcastle replied, that his majesty had another shop to go to, alluding to the duke of Argyle, who had deserted Pulteney, and joined those who opposed the new administration *.

He saw him reviled, persecuted, and loaded with such improbable accusations, as receiving a peerage and an estate in London from the crown, for screening the minister from public vengeance.

I think it a duty, and feel a satisfaction in being able to rescue the name of Pulteney from indiscriminate censure, and to prove, from the most unequivocal facts, that he has been unjustly accused of acting from base and fordid motives.

In regard to the peerage, he had never concealed his intention of procuring that dignity, for he had been frequently heard to say to his friends, "When I have turned out Sir Robert Walpole, I will retire into that hospital of invalids, the house of peers." But it is no less true, that he had repeatedly declined the honour under his administration. He who had driven out Walpole, who had declined the office of prime minister, who had made lord Wilmington first lord of the treasury, and filled the boards of treasury and admiralty, might easily have claimed for himself a peerage, without terms. The truth is, that Pulteney delayed accepting the title, until he had obtained the privy seal for the earl of Gower, who was obnoxious to the ministry; while lord Hervey, who held that distinguished office, was supported with all the influence of the king. In fact, he was so mortified by repeated instances of ill treatment, as to meditate a renewal of his opposition. He is even said to have received his new dignity with disgust, and to have trampled the patent of peerage under his feet †.

The second accusation against Pulteney, that for the purpose of screening the minister from public vengeance, he received from the crown a grant of a considerable estate in Piccadilly, is also no less unfounded. For this very accusation had been advanced in 1731, and was then amply refuted by Pulteney himself ‡. He shewed that the estate in question was a family estate of

* From the bishop of Salisbury.

† From lord Orford.

‡ It is thus stated by the author of a review of Mr. Pulteney's conduct:

"Pulteney hoped that by giving up all lucrative employments, and barely accepting a title, he had silenced obloquy and removed suspicion. But the avarice of his temper was so well and universally understood, that it was vulgarly supposed he had accepted large sums

for making the compromise between the crown and the leaders of the opposition; this was indeed looked upon to be equally an idle or groundless surmise; however, *it is very certain* that a great part of Piccadilly, which produced a very large income, and which *till that time*, had belonged to the crown, became *all of a sudden* the property of Mr. Pulteney." To this imputation, Pulteney himself replied:

"It is true, indeed, that this gentleman hath a very

of about £.1,200 or £.1,300 a year, held by a lease of ninety-nine years from the crown, and that he purchased the perpetuity at a fair price.

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This statement of the transaction does not, however, solely rest on Pulteney's own assertion; it is confirmed by the act of parliament itself, which passed on the 14th of February in 1727, and also from a letter * from the duke of Montagu to Sir Robert Walpole, requesting him to obtain from George the Second, the permission of purchasing certain estates in reversion; as a foundation for the grant, he observes, that his late majesty, George the First, had, *in the 8th year of his reign, granted to Mr. Pulteney the inheritance of several lands and tenements in St. James's, in reversion of above 99 years then in being.*

It is but justice to the memory of Pulteney, who has been so much calumniated for this part of his political conduct, to add his own apology, as given by himself, in a letter, written to bishop Newton †. "In every thing I did, when the change was made, I know I acted honestly, I am sure I acted disinterestedly, and if I did not do what the world may call wisely, it was the fault of a few friends who betrayed me, of the court that meant to weaken me, and of many others who too hastily mistrusted me, and turned their backs upon me. But time (as I always thought it would) has cleared up all these points; and I have the satisfaction to imagine that the king now wishes he had given into my schemes; the friends who betrayed me are sensible of, and sorry for their folly; and they who opposed me, though some of them have since got power into their own hands, are sensible how mean a figure they make with it, and how unequal they are to the posts they have. Certain it is, that no one can be so capable of writing history, as he who has been principally concerned in the great transactions; and

a very large estate, which hath been in his family for many generations. Some part of his estate was held by a lease from the crown, of which there was a term of ninety-nine years to come, after a term that was then in being. His grandfather left his estate in trustees, to be sold for the purchase of other lands of inheritance. Upon this occasion, he applied to the crown to buy off the inheritance, not as a favour, but as a fair purchaser, and was at the expence of an act of parliament to obtain it. He paid more than Sir Isaac Newton, or any other calculator, computes the value of such a purchase to be; for it cost him altogether, with charges, a year's purchase to make it inher-

ance: and I believe nobody will pretend to argue that an inheritance, after a term of above an hundred years to come, is worth one year's purchase, nor would this gentleman have given one single shilling for it, if it had not been to get his estate out of trustees hands.

"This is the fact; and what was the value of the estate thus purchased? Not above twelve or thirteen hundred pounds a year; which is but a small part of this gentleman's estate, even according to your own calculation; most of which was land of inheritance before."

* Walpole Papers.

† August 15, 1745. Life of Bishop Newton.

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if ever it should be necessary to inform the world (which I believe it will not) of the history of the late change, no one can to be sure do it, or at least furnish materials for doing it, so well as myself, for I may truly say, *Pars magna fui*; and I do not apprehend, nor can recollect one single fact, no not one circumstance in the whole affair, that it can be necessary to suppress or disguise. If avarice, ambition, or the desire of power had influenced me, why did I not take (and no one can deny but I might have had) the greatest post in the kingdom. But I contented myself with the honest pride of having subdued the great author of corruption, retired with a peerage, which I had three times at different periods of my life refused; and left the government to be conducted by those who had more inclination than I had to be concerned in it. I should have been happy, if I could have united an administration capable of carrying on the government with ability, œconomy, and honour."

A friend of Pulteney has also given a full explanation of his conduct, and stated the insuperable difficulties which he had to encounter from the discordant views of that heterogeneous opposition, which, with all his influence and abilities, he could not unite in sentiment, though he had succeeded in uniting them for the purpose of forming a consistent plan of attack.

"Like an opposition in parliament, carried on against an overgrown minister, all sorts of parties and connexions, all sorts of disagreeing and contradictory interests, join against him, at first, as a common enemy, and tolerable unanimity is preserved amongst them, so long as the fate of this parliamentary war continues in suspense. But when once they have driven him from the wall, and think themselves sure of victory, the jealousies and suspicions, which while the contest depended had been stifled, break out, every one, who shared in the fatigue, expects to share in the spoils, separate interests counteract each other, separate negotiations are set on foot, till at last, by untimely and unnecessary division, they lose the fruits of their victory, and the object of the common resentment is able to make terms for himself *."

* To this passage the author subjoined a note: "The true history of the transaction here alluded to, may possibly, some time or other appear; though as yet, we are persuaded, the world knows very little of it." Letter to two Great Men, 1760, p. 35. This excellent pamphlet was written by Dr. Douglas, now bishop of Salisbury, who in explanation, assured me that it was the intention of lord Bath, to have arranged, from his own recol-

lection and papers, a history of the events which accompanied and followed the resignation of Sir Robert Walpole. That he afterwards changed his mind, and said he would leave this task to Dr. Douglas, who should draw up an account after his death, and pointed to several papers which would be of use to him. From a knowledge of these facts, the public naturally formed the highest expectations, and bishop Newton justly observes,

"As

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-FIRST:

1742.

Examination of the Report of the Secret Committee.—Heads of Accusation urged against Sir Robert Walpole.—Undue Influence in Elections.—Grants of fraudulent Contracts.—Peculation, and Profusion in the Expenditure of the Money for Secret Service.—His private Fortune, pecuniary Acquirements, and the State of his Affairs at his Death.

THE charges against the ex-minister, which result from the report of the secret committee, may be reduced to three principal heads:

1. Undue influence in elections:
2. Granting fraudulent contracts:
3. Peculation, and profusion in the expenditure of secret service money.

Begun Saturday, November 7, and finished Friday, November 13.

The first charge, of undue influence in elections, is confined principally to the offer of a place of collector of the port of Weymouth to the mayor, if he would use his influence in obtaining the nomination of a returning officer; the promise of a living to the brother-in-law of the mayor for the same purpose; the removal of some revenue officers, who refused to give their votes for the ministerial candidate; and the distribution of some trifling sums for borough prosecutions and suits. Such petty abuses of power, which were swelled in the report * into almost capital charges, were so much below the dignity

The first charge examined.

* "The contest is plain and visible; it is: Whether the commons shall retain the third state in their own hands, whilst this whole dispute is carried on at the expence of the people; but, on the other side of the minister,

out of the money granted to support and secure the constitutional independency of the three branches of the legislature.

"This method of corruption is as sure, and therefore your committee apprehend, as criminal

"As Dr. Pearce had some knowledge of these and other transactions, so Dr. Douglas, by conversing several years almost daily with lord Bath, had frequent opportunities of informing himself of the truth of many particulars, and having collected sufficient materials for the purpose, is well qualified to draw the just character, and to complete the history of his noble patron, a debt which he owes to his memory, and it is hoped will one time or other fully discharge,

so that conformably to the rule, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established."

On the death, however, of lord Bath, general Pulteney destroyed all his papers, and the world has to regret that the learned prelate was, by this unfortunate circumstance, prevented from accomplishing a design, for which he alone could be sufficiently qualified.

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Second
charge.

dignity of the house, as to throw ridicule on their proceedings, and to excite the contempt of the public.

The second charge, of granting fraudulent contracts, is reduced to a *single* contract, given to Peter Burrel and John Bristow, two members of the house of commons, for furnishing money at Jamaica, towards the payment of the British troops; into which a friend of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams was admitted by his recommendation, and by which the contractors gained £. 14. 3s. 2½ d. per cent *. But even admitting the truth of the statement, the bargain, when first made, could not be unfavourable to the public: because, as appears upon the report, Burrel would not, on account of the risk, accept the whole contract, but admitted Bristow as his partner, and even offered a part of his share to his brothers, and two other gentlemen; all of whom declined for the same reason.

Third charge.

The next charge, that of peculation, and extravagance in the expenditure of the public money, is of a far more serious nature.

In order to affix the stigma of peculation on Sir Robert Walpole, it was necessary to shew, that the sums employed for secret service during the last ten years of his administration, were much greater than the sums expended on the same occasion, during an equal number of years, in any of the preceding reigns;

minimal a way of subverting the constitution as by an armed force, it is a crime productive of a total destruction of the very being of this government, and is so high and unnatural, that nothing but the powers of parliament can reach it; and as it can never meet with parliamentary animadversion, but when it is unsuccessful, it must seek for its security in the extent and efficacy of the mischief it produces; and therefore your committee apprehend it is the more necessary for your consideration, while its want of success yet leaves an opportunity to preserve and maintain your independence for the future." Report of the Committee of Secrecy, p. 24.

* "Your committee have been obliged to dwell the longer upon this contract, because the whole behaviour of the earl of Orford, who had the sole direction of it, seems so extraordinary, that they fear this part of the report would want credit, if they had not descended into the most minute parts of it.

"Here they find a contract entered into upon the good faith of the proposers only, with an ignorance of the value of the exchange, whether real or affected does not appear to your committee; and that defect so far from being endeavoured to be supplied by admitting proposals, or information from any other mer-

chants, that it seemed a determined point to shut it out, even where it seemed to obtrude itself upon him from the very offices subject to his inspection.

"But as if this injury to the troops and injustice to the nation had been too little, he rendered this contract more advantageous to the contractors, than their most sanguine expectation originally suggested to them.

"For though by the terms of the contract, the public was only to advance £. 27,000 in money, yet we find the further sum of £. 42,000, advanced to them before the arrival of the troops in America.

"And your committee observe, that the shares of the profits of this contract were dealt out to the deputy of the pay office, and to a friend of the paymaster of the marines, at the request of the said paymaster, without any advance of money, or trouble on their part; and it is very remarkable, that these shares were confined to the sums issued from their respective offices.

"And here your committee must observe, from the whole course of this proceeding, that neither the interest of the soldier, or the public, seemed to have been the object of the earl of Orford's attention." Report of the Committee of Secrecy, p. 13.

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and in making this comparative statement, the committee appear to realise the axiom, that "he who proves too much proves nothing." "The issuing," observes the committee, "such an immense part of the money, given for the support of the civil government, to these particular uses, during a time of profound tranquillity till the late rupture with Spain, greatly alarmed your committee, and put them upon examining what sums had been issued for the same services, in a period for the like number of years. And your committee beg leave to represent to you, that exorbitant as this sum may seem, they would have suppressed this part of their report, if by the comparison they had entered upon, they could any ways have reconciled their silence upon this head, to their duty in this house and the nation; and your committee hope, that the period they have pitched upon, will evince the truth of this intention, as it comprehends a general and most expensive war abroad, a demise of the crown, the happy establishment of the present royal family upon the throne, and an open and dangerous rebellion at home; in short, every event that can happen to justify extraordinary expences in carrying on the business of government. And it is not easy to express the surprise of your committee, when they found by the account laid before them, which is annexed, (N^o 11) that from the 1st day of August 1707, to the 1st day of August 1717, there was issued under the aforesaid heads, no more than the sum of £.337,960. 4s. 5½d."

The statement brought forward with such affected candour and moderation, is partial and inaccurate.

The partiality will appear from commencing the inquiry into the expenditure in 1707. For the adoption of this year, there seems no particular reason, excepting, that had they begun with the years immediately preceding, the secret service money would have been considerably larger. For in 1707, the union with Scotland was effected; and it is a well known fact, that large sums * of money were remitted, in 1705 and 1706, to Scotland, for the purpose of purchasing the consent, or silencing the opposition of the refractory natives, who vehemently resisted the establishment of the union.

Another proof of partiality is no less evident from closing their comparative statement with August 1717; at the time when the large pension granted to the abbot du Bois, the complicated negotiations for the

* At one draft £.20,000 was sent to the Scottish treasury for that purpose. Smollett, vol. 2. p. 93.

Period VIII. quadruple alliance, and the necessity of corrupting the senate of Sweden, on the death of Charles the Twelfth, and many domestic particulars, which rendered the expences of Sunderland's administration peculiarly heavy, must have increased the total amount of secret service money, during the years which immediately followed 1717.

1742 to 1745.

Another proof of partiality appears from confining their statement to only one term; for had they acted on the common principles of justice, they ought to have compared the secret expenditure, from 1731 to 1741, with that of several terms of ten years, from the restoration to the year 1731. Had they only selected the ten first years of queen Anne, from 1702 to 1712, or the first ten years of George the First, from 1714 to 1724, the average amount of the sums expended in secret service would have been considerably swelled; and perhaps to as large, if not to a larger amount, than those disbursed on the same occasion from 1731 to 1741. Had they only consulted and compared their own account of the three years, from August 1717 to August 1720, they might have found that during that period the expenditure for secret service, special service, and to reimburse expences, amounted to £.228,000; but they purposely omitted this just and candid method of proceeding, because Sir Robert Walpole was at that time in opposition, and had no share in the distribution. Had they carefully consulted the treasury books for the four succeeding years, they would have found £.458,000 was expended on the same account*. Had they carried their comparative statement still farther, they would have found that, in 1725, the year in which the Hanover treaty was concluded, the secret service money, expended between the 1st of May and the 4th of March, amounted to £.218,132†. But such an inquiry was not conformable to their views; which were, to diminish the amount of the sums expended before the year 1731, that those disbursed during the last ten years of Walpole's administration might appear enormously large.

In the second place, the statement of the committee is not a full and exact account of *all* the sums employed in secret service money from 1707 to 1717. For half of the term specified in the comparative statement, was a time of war, when an extraordinary ‡ allowance of £.10,000 per annum is granted for procuring secret intelligence, and 2½ per cent. deducted from the pay of all the foreign forces in the service of Great Britain, which, in

* Note in Sir Robert Walpole's hand-writing, at the end of an abstract of the civil list, made in 1725.

† An account of bounties, secret services, and other payments in the nature of secret

service, made between the 1st of May 1725, and the 4th of March following. In the Orford Papers.

‡ Faction Detected, p. 140.

five years, amounted to £. 178,802. 14 s. was principally employed for the same purpose *. It follows, therefore, that no just medium of comparison can be drawn from the money employed for secret service, in time of war and in time of peace; because in time of peace expences of this nature have no established provision, whereas in time of war extraordinary allowances are appropriated for that purpose.

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In addition to these extraordinary allowances, must likewise be joined a part of the civil list debt of £. 500,000, which was paid by parliament in 1713, and of £. 400,000, which the queen owed at her demise.

I have no particular documents which enable me to prove *unquestionably*, that *all* the sums expended for secret service, during the three first years of George the First, ending in August 1717, are not specified. But I have reason to assert, with full confidence, that it was so; for it is more than probable, that part of the debt of £. 800,000 on the civil list, which was paid off in 1720 and 1721, was contracted before August 1717. For that a part of the debt contracted by the civil list, was always supposed to have been expended in secret service money, is proved from the motion made by Pulteney in the house of commons, in 1725, on the proposal to pay the debt on the civil list, to address the king for an account of all monies which had been issued and paid to any person or persons, on account, for the privy purse, *secret service*, pensions, *bounties*, or any sum or sums of money to any person or persons *without account*, from March 25, 1721, to March 21, 1725.

From these remarks the fallacy of the observation will sufficiently appear, "that the sums expended on these services during the last ten years, amount to *near five times as much* as was expended in the ten years ending in August 1717; and that the two remarkable years, 1733 and 1734, amount to £. 312,128. 19 s. 7 d. being *considerably more* than the *total* of the whole ten years, from 1707 to 1717."

Nor can the injustice of the committee be sufficiently reprobated for selecting, as a matter of animadversion, what ought to have been a subject of praise; the two remarkable years, 1733 and 1734, in which commenced those complicated negotiations, that succeeded the death of Augustus king of Poland, when the sum of £. 312,128. 19 s. 7 d. for secret service, which they malignantly held forth to public censure, was well expended for procuring that secret intelligence, and for gaining those ministers abroad,

* Report of the Commissioners, in 1712.

Period VIII. which prevented a war with France and Spain, that would have added
 1742 to 1745. several millions to the national debt.

Having thus endeavoured to shew that the conduct of the committee in comparing the secret expenditure, during the last ten years of Sir Robert Walpole's administration, with the ten years from 1707 to 1717, was partial and fallacious, I shall next examine the account itself; and shall endeavour to prove that their statement was equally unjust. The report classifies secret expenditure under two principal heads. The first relates to the secret service money, of which the destination was not, and could not be specified, because it was expended for the secret purposes of government. It amounts to little more than the half, or £.786,355. 17s. 4d. The second comprises that money, the distribution of which is specified; and which is divided into special service, amounting to £.272,504. 0s. 8d. and to reimburse expences, amounting to £.205,390. 17s. 10d. They likewise added other articles, £.66,000 for the secretaries of state, £.68,800 upon account to the solicitor of the treasury, and £.50,077. 18s. to authors and printers. These totals, with a few other small articles, amount to £.1,440,128, which is stated to be the expence of the civil government in secret service money, during the space of ten years.

But although the report then continues by endeavouring to prove, that the money, issued under the three heads of secret service, special service, and to reimburse expences, was understood to mean one and the same thing; and though they shew that, according to the forms and accounts of the treasury, they are usually comprised under the same head; "yet who does not perceive a very wide difference between secret services, and the other two articles of special service, and the reimbursement of expences, although it is probable, that some part of the money, under these two heads, has been really applied that way? Yet very great sums must have been issued under these titles, to purposes very different from those which ought to have given so much alarm to the public*." And it is to be observed, that till the passing of Burke's bill, all treasury pensions were charged to the secret service.

As to the other three articles, viz. That of the solicitor of the treasury, that of the allowance of £.3,000 per annum to each of the secretaries of state, and that of the money issued to authors and printers, it is impossible, with any candour, to bring them into the charge of the secret service.

The first sum, to the solicitor, is given always upon account, viz. for crown prosecutions, and other necessary, obvious, and warrantable purposes of

* Faction Detected.

government, of which the committee themselves were so well aware, that they deducted that sum from the grand total.

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The second sum, which regards the secretaries of state, stands justly exceptionable in this comparison, because it was made a distinct article from that of secret service in all times, and is particularly specified as such in the statement of the annual expenditure before the revolution, being not included in the annual sum of £.89,968. 8s. 2½d. to which the annual average of the sums employed in secret service then amounted."

In regard to the charge that £.50,077. 18s. was paid to authors and printers of newspapers, such as *Free Britons*, *Daily Courants*, *Corncutter's Journals*, *Gazetteers*, and other political papers, between February 10, 1731, and February 10, 1741, it may be sufficient to observe, with the author of "*Faction Detected*," that is a matter rather to be laughed at, than considered seriously *. The gross amount of £.50,077. 18s. seems a large sum, but if divided by ten, the number of years, is reduced to only £.5,007. 15s. 9d. per annum, a sum too trifling to deserve notice.

If this reasoning is just, and these calculations accurate, we must deduct from £.1,453,400, the sum of £.662,781, or the total employed in special service, and to reimburse expences, together with the three articles for the secretaries of state, the solicitor of the treasury, and the authors and printers; and the remainder, £.790,619, will be the whole disbursement for secret service from 1731 to 1741. This total, upon a medium of ten years, is only £.79,061. 18s. per annum; a much less sum than was expended on the same occasion, during a similar term of years before the revolution †. And even if the sums for special service, and to reimburse expences, should be included, the amount will then be £.1,264,250 disbursed in ten years, or £.126,425 per annum, which certainly cannot be considered as an unreasonable sum for keeping the nation in tranquillity at home, and peace abroad, during a period of very intricate negotiation, conciliating foreign courts, and procuring intelligence, in bounties, pensions during pleasure, reimbursement of expences, extraordinaries to foreign ministers, presents and contingencies at home; and if due consideration be had to the difference of times of war and peace, to the increase in the value of money, and to the difficulty of procuring exact intelligence, this sum will not appear comparatively larger than the secret service money expended in the reigns of William, Anne, and George the First. It is rather an object of wonder how so much could be effected with this money; for no minister since Walsingham, ever procured such extensive and accurate intelligence as Sir Robert Walpole.

* *Faction Detected*, p. 137.† *Ibid.* p. 134.

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On reviewing these observations, we may venture to draw these conclusions : That no dependence can be had on the statement of the report ; it being unjust, partial, and fallacious ; that it fully vindicates the character of the minister from any charge of speculation, because it shews, that notwithstanding his unpopularity, and the eagerness with which his enemies endeavoured to criminate him, no guilt could be proved. The members of the committee, except two, were enemies to Sir Robert Walpole, they were inflamed by party, and goaded by personal antipathy ; and therefore some apology may be made for them, if under the impression of such sentiments, they gave erroneous statements. But what apology can be made for those compilers of our history, who, either ignorant of the true state of the question, or wishing to mislead the reader, have exaggerated even the accounts in the report, and do not blush to falsify the pages of history by asserting, that the enormous sum of £. 1,453,400 was employed in secret service money, when even the report makes a different statement, and when the fallacy of such a statement is unquestionably proved by the author of *Faction Detected*, which excellent performance they ought to have studied before they made such unqualified assertions.

There yet remains one article, too important to be omitted, which proves the malignity or ignorance of the committee.

" We find, moreover, that two days before he resigned, viz. Feb. 9th, £. 17,461 was paid into his hands by virtue of three warrants, signed but the same day, which were pawned with the bank officer, in order to raise the sum before they had passed through the usual forms of the exchequer, and till money came into that office, on account of the civil list, to redeem them."

This statement carries an appearance of great ignorance in the committee, of the circumstances attending issues of money from the exchequer, or it is an artful colouring of a very common transaction, in order to aggravate the supposed misconduct of Sir Robert Walpole, for the purpose of misleading the judgment of the public.

The commissioners of the treasury, at all times, have been in the practice of signing orders for the issue of money from the exchequer, as well out of the supplies, as out of the civil list, previous to the actual receipt at the exchequer, of the several heads of revenue, out of which, such orders are thereafter to be discharged*.

This usage is perfectly correct, and really necessary, because it enables the

* For the answer to this article, I am indebted to Edward Roberts, esquire, deputy to the clerk of the pells.

payment to be made to the party immediately after the future, or next receipt at the exchequer, which payment, but for this practice, must necessarily meet with great delay, from the time unavoidably to be taken up in drawing orders at the exchequer, and transmitting them for signatures and entry at the treasury.

Monies are very frequently wanted for pressing services, which require immediate payment, and various means have been devised for that purpose, long before the revenue, out of which those services are bound to be discharged, has found its way into the receipt of exchequer.

The legislature annually enables the minister to anticipate, by exchequer bills, the issues intended to be made out of the land and malt taxes, and the surplus of the consolidated fund.

As the civil list arises from a weekly produce, comparatively small, it must sometimes happen that urgent and unforeseen demands, will unavoidably compel the minister, or the creditor, to anticipate the sum required, by private means, until it can be regularly discharged, by due course, from the exchequer.

I take for granted that from the 8th to the 10th of February, 1741-2, there was, as has often happened, but little money remaining in the exchequer, applicable to the uses of the civil government, and that the sum of £.17,461, was immediately wanted, by Sir Robert Walpole, for services which his majesty must certainly have approved of, because he signed three separate warrants for the issue, as he was entitled by his prerogative to do, and he must also have given Sir Robert receipts to their amount.

These warrants are said to have been *pawned* to the bank officer, in order to raise the sum before they had passed through the usual forms, and till money came into that office, on account of the civil list, to redeem them. And here lies the whole gist of this charge.

Not to dwell on the ill-natured expression of pawned, so evidently introduced to heighten the accusation, or on the good nature of the bank officer, who certainly had no power nor means to accommodate the parties, without the specific and express directions of his superiors, the bank directors then in waiting; what is the fact but simply this? that a sum of money required for his majesty's service on the 9th of February, and certain of being paid at the exchequer on the 11th, was advanced by the bank of England on the undeniable security of the king's sign manual, the warrant of the commissioners of the treasury, and an exchequer order; the first and last of these instruments having been regularly countersigned by the commissioners of the treasury also.

Nor

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Nor could any apprehensions be entertained that after the minister's removal the payment could be stopped by those who were to succeed him, they having the power of confirming such issues as their predecessors had directed, but not of annulling them.

Although these sums were procured from the bank, they might have been advanced by a banker, or any other persons to whom Mr. Scrope or Mr. Stanhope might have thought proper to apply; the transaction being most undoubtedly a private accommodation, and in no respect of an official or public nature.

Sir Robert Walpole himself undertook to draw up an answer to the report of the secret committee, and made some progress in the work, but he relinquished the business on a conviction, that the answer must be either materially defective, or he must have related many things highly improper to be exposed to the public*. Among the Walpole papers is a rough draught in his own hand writing, which appears to have been the commencement of this vindication. It states in a very perspicuous manner the mode of issuing and receiving money at the exchequer, and proves undeniably that a minister could never appropriate to his own use any part of the secret service money, as the rules and forms which constitute the law of the exchequer, render it almost impossible to defraud or misapply any part of the public treasure. Although this document is incomplete, yet it appears too curious a paper to be withheld from the public: it is therefore inserted in the Correspondence.

Vindication
of Walpole
from the
charge of
peculation.

Before I close this review of the report, it will not be improper to make a few observations on the rumours industriously circulated, that Sir Robert Walpole gained *enormous* riches from the *plunder* of the public.

The current opinion of his vast wealth was, in some degree, sanctioned by his profuse style of living, and the large sums which he expended at Houghton, in buildings and purchases, which could not amount to less than £.200,000, and to which it was said the income of his estate, and the known salary of his *visible* employments were manifestly inadequate†.

This

* Enough, from Sir Robert Walpole.

† The confidence and rancour with which these charges were brought forward and supported, will appear from the following extracts, written at different periods:—

"With what face can he say that the minister's estate is no way *exorbitant*, when every body knows he has amassed immense riches, not in the *service of the crown*, but by *jobs*, *secret service*, the sale of honours, places, pen-

sions, and bargains, made in more places than *Exchange Alley*, by which thousands of families have been reduced to *beggary*."—Examiner, in answer to the Free Briton, July 1, 1731, p. 27.

"That he is the master of the national treasure is evident from his profusion, profusion to which no fund but the exchequer can be sufficient, and of which the income of his estate, and the known salaries of his *visible* employments,

This heinous charge will be best answered by a plain statement of his private property, pecuniary acquirements, and the situation of his affairs at his death.

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His private fortune.

In the first chapter of these Memoirs, I have shewn, from undoubted documents, that his family estate, to which he succeeded in 1700, amounted to £. 2,169 a year, and that it had been relieved from embarrassments by his wife's fortune. His generous temper, and liberality in promoting the Hanover succession, appear to have involved him in his early days in some difficulties, from which he was afterwards relieved by the emoluments of the offices which he held under the Whig administration in the reign of queen Anne, and while paymaster general of the forces, in the reign of George the First. But he greatly augmented his fortune by disposing of South Sea stock. He was, however, principally indebted for this acquisition to his own sagacity, and to the judgment and intelligence of his agents, Jacombe and Gibson; for he was so far from being entrusted with the secrets of the managers, that he was execrated by them for having uniformly opposed the project, and favoured the proposal of the bank. His good fortune, however, was still greater than his own discernment or the intelligence of

employments, are not equal to the tenth part. His conduct has, indeed, in this respect, been such, that he seems to have thought his triumph not complete, unless he shewed how little he regarded detection, and how much he despised the resentment of the nation. For this reason he has pleased himself with erecting palaces and extending parks, planting gardens in places to which the very earth was to be transported in carriages, and embracing cascades and fountains whose water was only to be obtained by aqueducts and machines, and imitating the extravagance of oriental monarchs, at the expence of a free people, whom he has at once impoverished and betrayed." Pulteney's speech for his removal, 1741-2.—Gentleman's Magazine for 1743. p. 175.

1740-1.—"Some people refine so much as to think Sir Robert will be glad to make himself sure of his *great fortune*, and quit, if he can have terms that can secure." "But if this wonderful thing (the resignation) should be brought about, Sir Robert will still be behind the curtain, with an immense estate, and make it very uneasy to any minister."—Duchess of Marlborough's Opinions, p. 109. On this subject the editor justly observes, "The *vast wealth* of Sir Robert Walpole was, I remember, the cry of the day; and it seemed as if

he had purchased most of the county of Norfolk, and possessed one-half, at least, of the stock of the bank of England. He himself said, in a familiar way, "People call me rich, but my brother will *cut up* better."

"Taken up near Arlington-street, a small memorandum book (supposed to be lost by a gentleman who is packing up his awls) consisting of several articles, particularly the following ones:—Settled on my eldest son, upon his marriage, £. 7,000 per annum. Item—Expended on my house in N—, and in pictures £. 150,000. Item—On plate and jewels, very proper for concealment, in case of an im—, £. 160,000. Item—In house-keeping, for six years past, at a moderate computation, £. 150,000. Item—Remitted at several times, within these twelve months last past, to the banks of Amsterdam, Venice, and Genoa, £. 400,000; with many other particulars, too tedious here to relate. If the gentleman who lost it, will please to apply himself to Caleb D'Anvers, of Gray's Inn, Esq.; the said memorandum book shall be restored gratis."—Advertisement in the Craftsman of November 28, 1730.

"Sir Robert is gone to day to his country-seat, loaded with the spoils and the hatred of the public," Chesterfield's Letters to his Son.

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his agents, for he narrowly escaped being a great sufferer in the last subscription, by the precipitate fall of the stock. Some orders which he had sent from Houghton, by Sir Harry Bedingfield, together with a list of his friends who wished to be subscribers, came too late to be executed; and the delay prevented his participating in the general calamity*.

This addition so considerably increased his revenue, as sufficiently to account for his expence in building, improving, and purchasing at Houghton, which he commenced in the following year, as well as for the acquisition of that noble collection of pictures which cost him £. 40,000, and which sold for nearly double the original price †.

During his continuance in office, he provided for his family by lucrative offices for life ‡. Thus he was enabled to expend his private fortune, considerably

* Jacombe to Walpole, Aug. 27, 1720. Orford Papers.

Walpole was not only himself a considerable gainer by disposing of his property in the South Sea stock, but he was also the cause that the earl of Pembroke derived the same advantage. That nobleman having requested his advice, as a person well versed in affairs of finance, whether he should sell out a large sum, or wait till another opportunity? Walpole answered, "I will only acquaint you with what I have done myself, I have just sold out at £. 1,000 per cent. and I am fully satisfied." The earl of Pembroke said nothing, and retired. Some years afterwards there arrived at Houghton, a fine bronze cast of the celebrated statue of the Gladiator at Rome, it was a pre-

sent from lord Pembroke, as a testimony of gratitude for this advice, which he had followed, and by which he had secured a very large part of his property.

Mrs. Walpole, however, did not pay so much regard to the opinion of her husband, for she was so much infected with the general frenzy, that in opposition to his repeated advice, she retained a sum of money, which she possessed in her own right, in the South Sea funds, and suffered, by her obstinacy, in common with the other losers. These anecdotes were communicated by lord Orford.

† The dearest picture in his collection, the "Doctors," by Guido, did not cost more than £. 630.

‡ Places of trust and profit held by Sir Robert Walpole.

June,	1705.	One of the council to the lord high admiral.
	1708.	Secretary at war.
Jan. 21,		Treasurer to the navy.
Oct. 5,	1714.	Paymaster of the forces.
Oct. 11,	1715.	First lord commissioner of the treasury, chancellor, and under treasurer of the exchequer.
June 11,	1720.	Paymaster of the forces.
April 3,	1721.	First lord commissioner of the treasury.
May 29,	1723.	Secretary of state, during the king's absence.
May 7,	1740.	Joint ranger of Richmond park.

Places held by or for the family of Sir Robert Walpole.

1721. Collector of the port of London, by Henry Hare and Robert Mann, during the lives of Robert Walpole, junior, and E. Walpole, junior, Esquires, sons of Sir Robert Walpole. The reversion of this place was granted on the 28th June 1716, and came into possession in 1721. It was held by deed of trust, at the disposal of Sir Robert Walpole

£.
2,000 per Annum.
April 5,

considerably increased by the rise of landed property *, and his ministerial emoluments, in that profuse style of living which incurred such unqualified censure. Chapter 61.
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These details of the estate and property of Sir Robert Walpole, cannot be deemed superfluous, when it is considered that he has been represented as a needy adventurer; that he was accused of having squandered and appropriated the public money; an accusation which was advanced without proof, believed without conviction, and is still credited by many who take rumours for facts, and give unlimited faith to the rancorous assertions of party.

April 5, 1721.	Robert Walpole, junior, clerk of the pells	—	£. 3,000 per Annum:
July 21, 1725.	Robert lord Walpole, ranger of Richmond Park.	—	
Nov. 17, 1727.	E. Walpole, clerk of the pleas in the court of exchequer	—	400
	— secretary to the treasury.	—	
	— to the duke of Devonshire, as lord lieutenant.	—	
Feb. 4, 1737.	H. Walpole, junior, usher of the receipt of the exchequer	—	2,000
Nov. 9, 1738.	— comptroller of the great roll	—	} 500
Nov. 1, 1738.	— clerk or keeper of the foreign estreats	—	
May 9, 1739.	Robert lord Walpole, auditor of the exchequer	—	7,000
	Edward Walpole, clerk of the pells, on the surrender of Robert lord Walpole.	—	

The fortune of Edward Walpole was only £.6,000, which he never received; that of his son Horace £.4,000, which was not paid till 40 years after the death of his father. The late lord Orford also assured me, that he never received more than £.200 from his father.

* The rental of his family estate, which in 1700 amounted to £.2,160 a year, could not be less at his resignation than between 4 and £.5,000 a year.

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CHAPTER THE SIXTY-SECOND:

1743—1745.

Renewal of the parliamentary Attack on Lord Orford—Defeated.—Consulted by the King.—His Influence in ministerial Arrangements.—Exerts himself for the Continuance of Hanoverian Troops in the British Pay.—His Speech in the House of Lords.—Goes to Houghton.—Returns to London at the King's Request.—Illness.—Death.

Orford re-
tires to
Houghton.

Returns to
London.

Motion
against him
revived.

Dec. 1.

Rejected.

Orford's re-
flections.

THE indemnity bill being rejected, the ex-minister retired to Houghton, and did not return to London till the next session of parliament, in the public business of which he took no active share.

Soon after his return to London, he experienced the inveteracy of those opponents who had not been gratified with places in the new arrangements.

Waller revived the motion for appointing a committee to inquire into the conduct of Robert earl of Orford, during the last ten years, of his being first commissioner of the treasury, and chancellor and under treasurer of the exchequer. He was seconded by Sir Watkin Williams Wynne. Although it is said that a debate took place on the subject, I cannot find any account of it in the periodical publications of the times, which plainly indicates that the clamours which had been raised against the ex-minister no longer engaged the popular attention. A contemporary historian only observes on this occasion, "This motion was plainly calculated to render the opposers of it odious; but the aim was in a great measure lost. The sum of the inquiry into the earl's domestic management, had fallen far short of the public expectation, and the parliament was possessed of all the papers that could give the necessary lights for an inquiry into his foreign conduct. The motion, therefore, was treated as tending to divert the attention of the house from the great affairs of government, and upon a division, was rejected by 253 against 186*."

The ex-minister seems to have felt these repeated aggressions with offended sensibility, and just indignation. In a fragment which formed part of an intended vindication of his conduct with respect to the charge of peculation, he thus animadverts on this unrelenting spirit:

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 607. Journals,

"What

"What then shall be said of these wicked outcries and clamours, which have so long filled and distracted the nation, of public robbers, plunderers of the public, ministers enriching themselves with the spoils of the people, and all that infamous weight of calumny, detraction, and defamation, with which the patriots have loaded the servants of the crown, have inflamed the minds of the populace, and for which we are told the nation are in the highest expectation of obtaining national justice. I think offenders of this sort, if any such there be, are proper objects of parliamentary justice, but if none such are to be found, what curse is not due to the authors of these detestable practices! And I think the vengeance of the people ought to be satisfied either upon the delinquents, if any crimes can be proved, or upon the inventors of such scandalous reports, who have so vilely imposed upon, and deluded the people. This is common justice; but to that height of impudence are some men now come, as avowedly to declare it is necessary that even injustice should be done, to answer the unjust expectations which they themselves have raised in the kingdom *."

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The king had, from long experience, conceived so high an opinion of Walpole's zeal and judgment, that he consulted him in matters of great emergency. It does not appear that any personal conferences took place, but his advice was sometimes communicated by the duke of Devonshire, and lord Cholmondeley, sometimes by colonel Selwyn †, and Ranby surgeon to the household. The letters which he wrote on these occasions were always returned by the king, who was scrupulously delicate in never retaining any papers of such a nature, from apprehensions that ill consequences might result from their future discovery. He was led to adopt this practice in consequence of finding, among the papers of George the First, some letters from Sunderland, that betrayed political secrets which ought never to have been revealed ‡.

Consulted by
the king.

Another mode of communication was through the king's confidential page of the back stairs, who used to meet the earl of Orford at the house of Mr. Fowle, in Golden-square, who had married his niece, and whom he had made commissioner of the excise. This meeting took place in the evening; sometimes as late as midnight. The earl of Orford used to come first; the daughters were previously ordered to retire, and the servants were

* Correspondence.

† Colonel John Selwyn, aid de camp to the duke of Marlborough, colonel of the third regiment of foot, groom of the bedchamber to George the Second, treasurer to queen Caro-

line, and afterwards treasurer to his present majesty George the Third, when prince of Wales.

‡ From lord Orford.

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sent from home under various pretences. The young ladies were instigated by curiosity to watch at the top of the stairs. The house door was opened by Mr. Fowle himself, a chair was admitted into the hall, and a little man came out, and went up stairs into the drawing-room, where he remained some time with the earl of Orford, and went away in the same mysterious manner *. This man was probably Livry the king's confidential page, the same who more than once paid similar visits to the earl of Bath †.

By means of this intercourse, he induced the king to raise Pelham to the head of the treasury, and to exclude the earl of Bath.

Assists in the
promotion of
Pelham.

Wilmington being in a declining state of health on the king's departure for Hanover in 1743, it was expected that his death would happen before his return; and it was feared a contest would take place between the two parties in the cabinet, for the first seat at the treasury board. Orford well knew that Carteret, who was to accompany the king abroad, would further the views of lord Bath, or attempt to place himself in that station. He, therefore, earnestly exhorted Pelham, who had always proved himself his steadfast friend, to apply for it before the vacancy. Pelham for some time declined taking that step, and was not prevailed on till after repeated importunities, and probably insinuations from the earl of Orford, that his solicitation alone was necessary to insure success. Pelham at length applied, and obtained a positive promise from the king.

Struggle in
the cabinet.

While this business was in agitation, a counter intrigue took place.

Lord Bath had from experience seen his error in supposing that he could direct public measures without holding an ostensible place. He felt that he was a cabinet counsellor without influence, and that few of those who owed their appointments or continuance in office to him, shewed any gratitude or deference to their benefactor. He had declined succeeding Sir Robert Walpole in 1742, because he had so repeatedly declared, both in parliament and in political publications, that he never would accept any place. But he was now induced to admit that a resolution thrown out in the ardour of debate, or advanced in party pamphlets, might be broken without subjecting himself to the charge of inconsistency; yet he did not adopt this resolution without some struggle.

All the members of the treasury board entreated lord Bath to place himself at their head, when the vacancy should happen, as the only measure which could prevent the ruin of their party. But their representations were ineffectual; he refused to make any application before the death of Wilming-

* Family Anecdote.

† From the bishop of Salisbury.

ton. On that event, which happened on the 2d of July, they renewed their solicitations, and at length overcame his reluctance. Lord Bath announced to Carteret, the united wishes of the whole treasury board, expressed his acquiescence, and requested the place. Sir John Rushout sent his own valet de chambre, John George, express to Germany with the dispatch *. The messenger was detained six weeks at Hanau, where the king was engaged in negotiating the treaty of Worms. At length no other answer was returned, than that the king's determination would be signified by the duke of Newcastle.

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1743 to 1745.

About the same time that this intimation was brought, a messenger came from lord Carteret, announcing the appointment of Pelham to the vacant place at the head of the treasury. This intelligence so greatly surprised the duke of Newcastle, that in a letter to the lord chancellor, who was then in the country, he expresses himself with marks of no less astonishment than satisfaction; boasts of the victory over Carteret, extols the king's firmness, but acknowledges his inability to ascertain the causes of this fortunate event †.

Pelham first
lord of the
treasury.

August 23.

The mystery of this transaction was so impenetrable to both parties, that while Newcastle appeared to be at a loss by what means the influence of Carteret had been defeated, lord Bath suspected that he was betrayed by Carteret. But it is more than probable, that before the return of Rushout's messenger, the king had consulted the earl of Orford, who strongly dissuaded the acceptance of his rival's offer, and enforced the king's adherence to his promise in favour of Pelham.

Another strong proof of the king's personal consideration for the fallen minister, appeared in December. When lord Gower resigned the privy seal, Sir John Rushout again pressed lord Bath to come into office by accepting that place. He thought that he had prevailed on him, and desired lord Carteret to mention it to the king. But lord Bath, instead of applying for it himself, in an audience warmly recommended the earl of Carlisle ‡, who thought himself so secure of success, that he received the compliments of his friends. The king, however, declined this request, and instantly nominated lord Cholmondeley, the son-in-law to the earl of Orford.

Lord Chol-
mondeley
privy seal.

The ascendancy of his interest, and the decline of Bath's credit, became daily more manifest. When Rushout was made treasurer of the navy, his place at the treasury board was filled by Henry Fox, the inalienable ad-

Other
changes.

* From the bishop of Salisbury, communicated by Sir John Rushout.

† August 1743. Hardwicke Papers.

‡ From the bishop of Salisbury.

Period VIII.

1742 to 1745.

Popular dis-
contents.

herent of Orford; and when Sandys was created a peer, and made cofferer of the household, Pelham united in himself the offices of first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer.

When Orford arrived in London, before the opening of the session, he found the nation in an alarming ferment, and the most inveterate divisions in the cabinet between the parties of Carteret and Newcastle. George the Second was extremely unpopular. His partiality to the electorate, and rumours of his preferring the Hanoverian to the British forces, occasioned clamours no less general and vehement, than those excited against William for favouring the Dutch. The toast of "no Hanoverian king," was not unfrequently given in large companies; and the very name of a Hanoverian became a term of disgrace and obloquy. The popular outcry, that England was involved in a war with France, for the support of German measures, opposite to her real interests, was now as violent against Carteret, as the complaints which had been urged against Walpole for tameness and pusillanimity, and base submission to the dictates of France.

Outcry
against Ha-
nover troops.

Not only the members in opposition decried the king's partiality, and opposed the continuance of the Hanoverian troops in British pay, but the leading members of the cabinet displayed equal repugnance. Newcastle was violent on this head, and after enforcing the necessity of their dismissal, stigmatised them by the appellation of a "body of troops, whose views have directed our motions, and whose fears have checked our victories *."

In the midst of these popular clamours and ministerial invectives, the king returned from the continent, and Carteret found a large majority of the cabinet determined to oppose the continuance of the Hanoverian troops. Notwithstanding the indignity to the king, and chagrin to himself, which must result from this determination, he was compelled to acquiesce. The question was therefore abandoned, and the cabinet engaged in forming other expedients.

Exertions of
Orford.

The arrival of Orford at this juncture, gave a new aspect to the transactions of the ministry. He wholly disapproved the conduct of the war, which had made England the principal instead of an auxiliary on the continent; he had reprobated the military proceedings in Flanders, which he properly ascribed to the fervour of Newcastle, eager for continental victories, and the subservience of Carteret to the king's views. But the evil could not now be remedied. He deprecated therefore so gross an insult to the king, without

* The duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, November 7, 1743. Hardwicke Papers.

benefit to the nation. He was aware that if these troops were discharged, others must be substituted, which in the actual state of Europe could not easily be found, and if found would not be attended with less expence. He instantly remonstrated with Pelham and the other members of the cabinet, over whom he retained any influence, against the dereliction of the measure, exposed the pusillanimity of yielding to popular outcry and exaggerated rumours; and he offered to frame the question in such a manner as should render it palatable, and facilitate its adoption.

He never laboured any point during his own administration with more zeal; he employed that personal credit and fascinating influence which he possessed in so eminent a degree over his friends. At his request, a dinner was arranged at Sir Charles Hanbury Williams's, where he met those members of the cabinet, and a few leading men of both houses, who were averse to the measure. He enforced, with so much energy, the necessity of renewing the question, notwithstanding the occurrences of the campaign, that he finally brought them over to his opinion. In fact, it was *solely* owing to his exertions, that the measure was not abandoned. He did not himself support it by his eloquence in the house of peers, but his brother Horace defended it in the commons with great ability and strength of argument; at the same time, he accompanied his defence with so many sarcastic allusions to the weakness and subserviency of the cabinet, as to demonstrate that he acted from no impulse, but that internal conviction which flowed from his own experience and his brother's suggestions*.

The earl of Orford, after his resignation, had seldom appeared in the house of lords, and seldom spoke, having observed to his brother Horace, that he had left his tongue in the house of commons. On one occasion, however, he shewed that he still retained his former powers of eloquence. He had given ministers repeated information of the hostile designs of France, to invade this country in support of the Pretender; but his intelligence had been disregarded and ridiculed as the effusions of discontent, and the remains of those apprehensions of Jacobitism, which had been considered by his enemies as artifices to keep the nation in continual suspense and alarm. It appeared, however, that his intelligence was well founded.

On the 18th of February the king sent a message to both houses, acquainting them that he had received undoubted information, that the eldest son of the Pretender to his crown was arrived at Paris, who, in concert with some of his disaffected subjects, was preparing to make an invasion,

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Hanover
troops con-
tinued.

King's mes-
sage.

* Lord Hardwicke's Parliamentary Journal. Debrett's Debates.

Period VIII, 1742 to 1745. and was to be supported by the French fleet then in the channel; and adding, that he did not doubt their concurrence in proper measures to defeat the design. Accordingly, both houses joined in an address, expressing the warmest zeal and unanimity, and signifying that they would, at the hazard of their lives and fortunes, support his right and title to the kingdom in opposition to, and defiance of the Pretender and his adherents, and all other enemies*.

Papers communicated.

On the 28th of February, Newcastle, by order of the king, laid before the house of lords, some letters and papers containing farther intelligence concerning the intended invasion from France; he concluded by observing, that their lordships having already expressed, in the address of last week, their indignation at so daring and insolent an attempt, and their resolution to support his majesty against the Pretender and his adherents, he did not think it possible to find words more expressive of zeal and duty, than were chosen on that occasion, and with which the king was so much satisfied, that he had been pleased to declare his confidence in their vigour and unanimity†.

Speech of Orford.

At the conclusion of his speech, the house ordered counsel to be heard in a private cause, when Orford rose from his seat, and with no less animation than dignity, observed, that he had made a resolution of never troubling the house, and that it was not without a very uncommon degree of grief he found it now indispensably necessary to break that resolution, so necessary, that he could not, in his opinion, continue silent without a crime.

"I sincerely wish," he said, "that my former apprehensions concerning France and the Pretender, for which I have been so often and so severely ridiculed, had not been so often and so fully verified. But I could not easily have believed, that it could ever have been necessary for me to speak on an occasion like this; that it could ever have fallen to my lot to remind your lordships of the respect due to the person of our sovereign; I could not easily have believed, nor could I have imagined, that the common forms of decency could have been violated in this august assembly. It is with the greatest emotion and surprise that I see such a neglect of duty. My knowledge of your lordships, will not suffer me to term it by any harsher name than that of forgetfulness; but such forgetfulness I have never known in my long acquaintance with parliamentary proceedings.

"When his majesty has communicated to your lordships intelligence of the highest importance, is he to receive no answer from the house? Is his intimation to be passed over without ceremony and without regard?

* Debrett's Parliamentary Debates from 1743 to 1745, vol. 1, p. 172.

† Debrett.

Such

Such behaviour must doubtless arise from inconsiderateness, for the least reflection will show that it is not easy to treat our sovereign with less respect. A little recollection, my lords, will soon convince you, that when his majesty's care and penetration have been employed for the security of the public happiness, when, as he promised, he has endeavoured to obtain a more exact account of the pernicious designs of France; when he has made some further discoveries of them, and has shewn his regard for our counsels, by imparting them to us; can we be so undutiful, so indecent, as not to return an address of thanks? If we do not, how will it appear that we have received them? For this reason, if for no other, the noble duke ought, in my humble opinion, to have made some motion for that purpose. And certainly, my lords, our language is not so barren that we cannot find words to express our duty on every occasion, and testify our acknowledgments for every instance of regard shown us by our sovereign; and although an address may appear to some a repetition of that which has been lately presented, yet I cannot think it an unreasonable or a superfluous repetition.

"As such treatment, my lords, has never been deserved by his majesty, so it has never before been practised. And sure, my lords, if his hereditary council should select, for such an instance of disrespect, a time of distraction and confusion; a time when the greatest power in Europe is setting up a Pretender to his throne, and when only the winds have hindered an attempt to invade his dominions; it may give our enemies occasion to imagine and report, that we have lost all veneration for the person of our sovereign.

"I have, indeed, particular reason to express my astonishment and my uneasiness on this occasion; I feel my breast fired with the warmest gratitude to a gracious and royal master, whom I have so long served; my heart overflows with zeal for his honour, and ardour for the lasting security of his illustrious house. But, my lords, the danger is common, and an invasion equally involves all our happiness, all our hopes, and all our fortunes.

"It cannot be thought consistent with the wisdom of your lordships, to be employed in determining private property, when so weighty an affair as the security of the whole kingdom demands your attention; when it is not known but at this instant the enemy has set foot on our coasts, is ravaging our country with fire and sword, and threatening us with no less than extirpation or servitude.

"If you neglect the public security, if you suffer the declared enemies of your name to proceed in their designs without resistance, where will be your dignities, your honours, and your liberties? You will then boast no more of the high prerogatives of your house, your freedom of speech, and

Period VIII. share in the legislature. If the enemy, my lords, should obtain success, that
 1742 to 1745. success which they apparently expect, and which yet they would not hope, without some prospect of being joined by the disaffected part of our own countrymen, the consequence must be, that the person whom they would place on the throne, would retain only the shadow of a sovereign; he would be no other than a vice-roy to the French king; and your lordships, who now sit in this house with a dignity envied by every class of nobility in the world, would then be no better than the slaves of a slave to an ambitious, arbitrary tyrant.

"Pardon me, my lords, if a zeal for his majesty, for your honour and dignities, and the safety of the nation, fires me with uncommon ardour. Permit me to rouse you from this lethargy, and let it not be said, that you suffer any disregard to be shewn to intimations thus important; intimations sent by his majesty, and which relate to nothing less than the preservation of the kingdom. I hope, therefore, before you proceed to call in the counsel for a private cause, you will shew so much regard to the great, the universal, the national interest, as to concert a proper form of address to his majesty, that he may not appear labouring for our safety, while we ourselves neglect it *."

Address to
the king.

It is observed by a person who was present at the time †, that he spoke this speech with an emotion and spirit which shewed that it was quite unpremeditated, and came from his heart. It had an immediate effect; the whole house saw the impropriety of the proceeding. The minister confessed his inattention, though in a tone and manner, and with such expressions, as shewed that he was stung with the remark. An address was immediately drawn up by the chancellor, similar to that which had passed on the 18th, and was unanimously approved. The prince of Wales, struck with this well-timed effusion of loyalty, quitted his seat, and taking lord Orford by the hand, expressed his grateful acknowledgments. As a testimony of his satisfaction, he revoked the prohibition which prevented the family of lord Orford from attending his levee ‡.

Satisfaction
of the prince
of Wales.

Orford goes
to Houghton.

At the close of the session, Orford retired as usual to Houghton, where he remained under the tortures of a nephritic complaint, till he received a summons from the king to return to London.

Distress of the
king.

At this time the king was exceedingly distressed and embarrassed; he was divided between his inclination for Carteret, and his inability of carrying, without

* The earl of Hardwicke's manuscript journal of remarkable debates. Debrett's Debates, vol. 1. p. 177.

† The late earl of Hardwicke.
‡ From lord Orford.

the assistance of the Pelhams, through both houses, the favourite measure of prosecuting the war with vigour in Flanders. Ever since the resignation of Walpole, who had cemented the bond of union which kept the heterogeneous parts together, and gave strength to the executive government, the administration had been weak and disjointed. There was no one person whose ascendancy in the closet, influence in parliament, and pre-eminence of talents, enabled him to take a decided lead in the cabinet. Great divisions had taken place, and given rise to a long series of cabals, between Newcastle and Carteret, which if not suppressed or moderated, threatened ruin both to the domestic and foreign affairs. These feuds had arisen to a height so alarming, as to necessitate the removal of one of the contending parties.

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Feuds in the cabinet.

Carteret, who on the recent death of his mother, had succeeded to the earldom of Granville, was strenuously supported by the king, but the party of Newcastle preponderated both in the cabinet and in parliament. It became a great object of both parties to secure the interest of lord Orford, as well from the consideration paid to his advice by the king, as from the number of members in both houses whom he directed or influenced. In conformity with this view, Newcastle observes, in a letter to the chancellor; "It is necessary to find means of satisfying lord Orford, and a certain number of his friends; for without this last, we have no ground to stand on, and shall, I fear, be obliged to shew in a few months that we have not strength enough to support the king's affairs, though he should put them into our hands *."

Struggle between Newcastle and Carteret.

Carteret adopted, as he thought, a surer method, which was to employ the influence of the king. By his majesty's command, lord Cholmondeley wrote to his father-in-law. He informed him that the king, after many gracious expressions and acknowledgments of his service, in regard to the question for the continuance of the Hanover forces, requested his attendance a week or ten days before the meeting of parliament. The long experience, he said, of his zeal and attachment, the knowledge of his consummate judgment in domestic affairs, the consciousness of the great weight of his opinion, and influence over so many members in both houses of parliament, induced the king to require his advice and concurrence in subjects of the highest importance, at this critical juncture.

Orford sent for by the king.

The answer was couched in the most respectful terms of duty and zeal. After saying, that as the care and study of his life, while he had the honour to serve the king, had been directed to deserve his favour and good opinion, so he should still, in a private capacity, persevere in his endeavours to merit the

His answer.

* Duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, November 10, 1744. Hardwicke Papers.

continuance

Period VIII. 1742 to 1745. continuance of his majesty's grace and goodness, the only reward he had now to ask for all past or future services. He expressed his intention of obeying the king's commands by setting out for London, as soon as his health would permit. He hoped to arrive there before the meeting of parliament was settled, and the business finally adjusted, till which time, he could be of no use in recommending the measures to such persons as paid any regard to his opinion. With respect to the conduct of affairs, he declined entering into any previous consultation, and yet ventured, with his usual frankness, to give a decided disapprobation to the system of continental politics which had been recently pursued. He observed, "I am heartily sorry to see the king's affairs reduced to such extremities. It has been a long time easy to foresee the unavoidable, and almost unsurmountable difficulties that would attend the present system of politics. I wish to God it was as easy to show the way out of them. But be assured, that I will in every thing, to the utmost of my power, consult and contribute to the honour, interest, and safety of the king and kingdom*." In reply, lord Cholmondeley expressed the king's cordiality and satisfaction, and enforced the necessity of his immediate appearance, if it could be done without injury to his health.

Arrival in London.

In this situation of affairs he was requested by Pelham, and advised by his brother Horace, who suggested that it was a manoeuvre of Carteret, to delay his journey, as on his arrival he would be embarrassed between the choice of two contending parties, and might not be able to act without offending the king. Yet although the state of his health was fully sufficient to justify his continuance in the country, he thought it his duty to obey the summons of the king; and left Houghton on the 19th of November. On his arrival in London, he found the whole arrangement finally settled, without any occasion for his concurrence. The Pelhams had formed a coalition with the prince's friends, the Tories and opposition Whigs, which was ludicrously called the *Broad Bottom*. Granville had been compelled to resign, but carried with him the regret of the king, and strong assurances of future favour. Harrington succeeded him as secretary of state.

Illness.

But the smiles or frowns of sovereigns, the petty intrigues of courts, the bickerings of discordant politics, and the arrangement of a new administration were no longer objects of Orford's attention.

Sufferings.

He had long been afflicted with the stone. The journey from Houghton, which he employed four days in performing, aggravated the symptoms, and brought on such excruciating torments, that the description of his sufferings, during the last day's journey, which was only twenty miles, filled Ranby †

* The earl of Orford to lord Cholmondeley, November 17, 1744. Correspondence.

† Ranby's Narrative.

himself

himself with horror. Not finding the expected relief from regular medical assistance, he had recourse to Dr. Jurin, who administered a powerful solvent, which, contrary to the advice of his friends, the patient repeatedly took in large quantities. The medicine dissolved the stone, but the violence of its operation lacerated the bladder, and occasioned the most excruciating agonies. His only relief was opium, and from an apprehension of returning pain, he took such large and repeated doses, that for six weeks he was almost in a constant state of stupefaction, except for two or three hours in the afternoon, when he seemed to rouse from his lethargy, and converse with his usual vivacity and cheerfulness.

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A few days before he died, he gave an instance that his judgment was found and unimpaired. The duke of Cumberland having ineffectually remonstrated with the king, against a marriage with the princess of Denmark, who was deformed, sent his governor, Mr. Poyntz, to consult the earl of Orford, on the best methods which he could adopt to avoid the match. After a moment's reflection, Orford advised him to give his consent to the marriage, on condition of receiving an ample and immediate establishment, "and believe me," he added, "when I say, that the match will be no longer pressed." The duke followed his advice, and the event happened as the dying statesman had foretold *.

Consulted by
the duke of
Cumberland.

He bore his sufferings with unexampled fortitude and resignation.

Fortitude.

Ranby, his surgeon, who published a narrative of his last illness, thus expresses himself: "When I recollect his resigned behaviour, under the most excruciating pains, the magnanimous sentiments which filled his soul, when on the eve, seemingly, of dissolution, and call to mind the exalted expressions that were continually flowing from him at this severe time of trial; however extraordinary his natural talents, or acquired abilities were; however he had distinguished himself by his eloquence in the senate, or by his singular judgment and depth of penetration in counsels; this incomparable constancy and astonishing presence of mind, must raise in my opinion as sublime ideas of him, as any act of his life besides, however good and popular; and reflect a renown on his name, equal to that which consecrates the memory of the remarkable sages of antiquity."

He expired † on the 18th of March 1745, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. His remains were interred in the parish church at Houghton, without monument or inscription:

Death.

"So peaceful rests without a stone, a name

"Which once had "honours," titles, wealth, and fame ‡."

* From lord Orford.

† An account of his family and descendants

is given in the genealogical table, chap. 1.

‡ Pope.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-THIRD.

Principles of Walpole's Administration.—Pacific System.—Finance.—Commerce.—Public Character.

THE portrait of a Minister is to be traced from the history of his whole administration. Candour therefore requires that we should not judge by the selection of detached parts, but combine the whole in a connective series, and referring his conduct to one grand principle of action, judge of it as critics do of an epic poem, by comprehending, in one point of view, the beginning, the middle, and the end.

General principle.

Did the administration of Walpole present any uniform principle, which may be traced in every part, and gave combination and consistency to the whole?—Yes.—And that principle was THE LOVE OF PEACE.

Preventive measures.

The great leading features of this pacific system, are thus delineated by himself:

“ To prevent a war, and to take the proper steps, that may not only keep us out of the war, but enable us to contribute towards restoring the public tranquillity, is no less desirable, and a conduct no less justifiable, than to carry on and support a war we are unhappily engaged in. If then *paries cum proximus ardet*, it is as advisable to look after ourselves, and to prevent the flames reaching our houses, as it would be to extinguish a fire already kindled; and if to prevent, and by proper care to avoid a cold or a fever, be easier, safer, and wiser, than to cure the distemper, I may venture to maintain, that measures tending to prevent a war, or that are preparatory to the carrying it on, if it becomes unavoidable, are as justifiable and as reasonable, if necessary, as the same measures would be in case of an actual war*.”

This same system is also fully developed by Horace Walpole.

“ This salutary plan of *preventive and defensive measures*, has been the fundamental rule of all his late and present majesty's counsels; the rudder, by which their actions have been steadily and constantly steered, with respect to the conduct of foreign princes and states: Ever cautious not to plunge their

* Some Considerations on the Public Funds, p. 106.

faithful subjects rashly into a ruinous war, and equally prepared and resolved to protect their just rights against all attempts whatsoever, should they be obliged to take up arms for that purpose.

"Upon this principle it may be, and indeed has been necessary to make, at different times, defensive alliances in conjunction with, or in opposition to the same powers, as the different dispositions and behaviour of those powers might tend to the benefit & disadvantage of this nation: And this seeming change of conduct will appear not to have arisen from inconstancy of temper, or of views on our part, but from the variation of views and intentions on the part of others *."

This preventive system was incessantly reprobated by his adversaries, and assailed with all the weapons of eloquence and wit. He was accused of extreme folly, in laying down a system, prudent for a petty state, but very improper for a country which had so great a sway, and ought to take the lead in Europe. It was stigmatized as a servile submission to the influence and interests of France. His love of peace was characterized as a temporising system of expedients, a dereliction of national honour, and a pacific obstinacy. He was derided for fitting out provisional fleets and pacific armaments, which plunged the nation into the same expence as an active war, while they produced nothing but Spithead exhibitions, and Hyde Park reviews.

Objections of his opponents.

Allowing, however, the full effect of these objections, and making no abatements for the prejudices of party, and the jealousy of political rivalry, few words are necessary to shew the beneficial consequences which resulted from the *general* tenor of his administration. The protestant succession was established, the Jacobite faction suppressed; the government acquired energy on a constitutional basis; and by the prevention of foreign war, domestic tranquillity was secured. Under the calm stability of such a government, public credit flourished, commerce increased, manufactures were improved, and agriculture ameliorated.

Effects of this pacific system.

The strongest objection which has been urged against the minister, is that the general tendency of his foreign measures was calculated to aggrandize the house of Bourbon, and depress the house of Austria. In examining this topic, it is necessary to consider the motives which induced him to adopt this line of conduct. He was fully aware that France was the only power which could effectually assist the Pretender; he constantly predicted, and the prediction was verified by the event, that whenever there was a war with France, the British crown would be fought for on British ground.

French alliance.

* The Interest of Great Britain steadily pursued, p. 24.

Period VIII. 1742 to 1745. By maintaining amity with France, during so long a period, he broke and dispirited the disaffected party at home, and diminished the danger of an invasion, by increasing the friends, and reducing the enemies of the new family on the throne.

Conduct towards the Emperor.

An act of policy, however, attendant on this alliance, which none of our historians seem sufficiently to have appreciated, and which shewed great address and prudence in the ministers, was, their unceasing attention to prevent the French from improving their fleet, or exercising their seamen. *The care of the sea England took upon herself*; and Fleury was accused by the French, of having been cajoled by Walpole to sacrifice the marine.

If any part of Walpole's conduct stands peculiarly exposed to censure, it is his refusal to assist the house of Austria, when exposed without an ally to the united efforts of France, Spain, and Sardinia.

As there is scarcely any vice without its concomitant virtue, so there is no virtue without an alloy. His well known desire of peace, exposed him to be overreached by those with whom he was treating, and who availed themselves of his extreme unwillingness to engage in hostilities. In fact, the minister did not always appreciate the just maxim, "that the discovery of vehement wishes generally frustrates their attainment; that too much impatience to conclude a treaty, gives an adversary great advantage; that a sort of courage belongs to negotiation, as well as to operations in the field; and that a negotiator must seem willing to hazard all, if he wishes to secure any material object *."

Nothing can justify the desertion of the Emperor, but the internal situation of the country, the fear of exciting discontents at the eve of a general election, and the full conviction that the Pretender would, in case of a rupture, receive assistance from France, and attempt an invasion. Nor can it be deemed an improbable supposition, that spirited resolutions, if adopted in 1733, would have alarmed Fleury, inclined to pacific measures, and fearful of a rupture with England, when the French navy was almost annihilated, would have compelled France to guaranty the pragmatic sanction, and thus have averted the danger, which the house of Austria incurred on the death of Charles the Sixth, of an irretrievable depression.

But peace is so desirable for a commercial country, that much praise must be due to the minister even for erring, if he erred, in preserving so great a blessing. And who shall presume to censure a conduct which conferred inestimable advantages, while it exposed to uncertain evils; which by the

* Burke's Thoughts on a Regicide Peace.

increase

increase of trade and manufactures, the necessary consequences of a stable and tranquil government at home, gave to this country the sinews of war, and enabled the greatest war minister * whom this country ever produced, to make those vast and glorious efforts which terminated in the depression of the house of Bourbon.

Chapter 63.

The opposers of Sir Robert Walpole invariably and constantly asserted, that his administration was founded on the open and manifest sacrifice of the British glory and interest abroad, to those foreign dominions, in which it was even a condition in the act of settlement, that we should have no concern, and which was acknowledged by the ministers themselves to be the touchstone of all our negotiations at every court of Europe †. But it must be allowed, even by those who so peremptorily advanced this assertion, that never was the union of Hanover with Great Britain more conducive to the real interests of this country, if its *general* effects, notwithstanding some occasional deviations, contributed to preserve us in peace abroad.

Hanoverian influence.

In fact, though it cannot be denied, that German prejudices and partial interests occasionally interfered with the great concerns of England, yet it is no less true, that no minister ever made so many, and such powerful remonstrances against petty Germanic schemes. He took all proper opportunities of inculcating just notions of dignity and credit. He had even the courage to observe to George the Second, that the welfare of his dominions both at home and abroad, and the felicity of Europe, depended on his being a great king, rather than a considerable elector.

He also laboured incessantly to mitigate the effects of the rooted inveteracy between the houses of Brunswick and Brandenburg. Finding the king vehement in a resolution to commence hostilities with the king of Prussia, either for enrolling troops on the territories of Hanover, or for some inconsiderable acquisition in Germany; he represented the danger and ill policy of the attempt. "Will your majesty," he said, "engage in an enterprise which must prove no less disgraceful than disadvantageous? Is not the inequality of forces so great, that Hanover will be no more than a breakfast to the Prussian army?"

If we compare the uniform conduct of Walpole with the uniform conduct of opposition, we shall find that he struggled with all his might for the preservation of the credit, quiet, and happiness of the nation. They contended for such proceedings as had a tendency to involve the country in all the misfortunes of foreign and domestic war.

* William Pitt, earl of Chatham.

† Case of the Hanover Forces.

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While they were declaring that the nation was impoverished, the trade ruined, the people loaded with insupportable burthens, and all farther resources totally cut off, they were clamouring for foreign aggression, which would have required additional supplies, and increased the national embarrassments. And when their unceasing efforts had plunged the nation into a war, the public soon discovered the falsity of that assertion, so confidently thrown out for a number of years by Bolingbroke, and re-echoed by the members of opposition, that the preventive and temporising measures of Sir Robert Walpole had been attended with as much expence as an active war. For the war, which commenced in 1739, and terminated with the peace of Aix la Chapelle in 1749, added thirty millions to the national debt; and one year of the German war cost more than all the preventive measures and *pacific obstinacy* of Sir Robert Walpole during his whole administration.

Finance.

As an able minister of finance, his merit has been generally acknowledged, not only by his friends and admirers, but even by several of his most violent opponents. No one can suspect Pitt of paying a tribute of applause to his memory from mean and adulatory motives; yet even he observed, in the house of commons, that Sir Robert Walpole was a very able minister. Perceiving several members laugh, he added, "The more I reflect on my conduct, the more I blame myself for opposing the excise bill," and concluded by saying, with his usual energy; "Let those who are ashamed to confess their errors laugh out. Can it be deemed adulation to praise a minister who is no more?" The whole house seemed abashed, and became silent*.

It is unnecessary to urge any other proof of his abilities for finance, than that confidence which, throughout his whole administration, monied men and the nation placed in the government; and that nothing created greater alarm among them, than the apprehensions that he would either rapidly pay off the national debt, or reduce the interest. This fact is an answer to those speculative reasoners, who not adverting to the temper of the times, and judging of past transactions by present circumstances, indiscriminately censure the minister for not discharging the whole public burthens, for alienating the sinking fund, and for opposing Sir John Barnard's plan to reduce the interest of the national debt.

His financial operations have been already so amply discussed in the course

* Communicated by Dr. Symonds, professor of modern languages in the university of

Cambridge, who was in the gallery of the house of commons at the time.

of these memoirs *, that it is needless to enlarge on particular topics. The improvement, however, in the mode of borrowing by means of exchequer bills, which I have omitted to mention, deserves particular notice. The custom was to borrow a large sum, the interest of which continued to accrue till the whole sum advanced on bills was paid off, though in the interval considerable portions of the money had been paid into the exchequer. Walpole made a reform in 1723, by which the bills were regularly taken up as the money came in, and by this means saved an enormous charge of interest to government †.

Parsimony of the public money was one of his chief characteristics. In corroboration of this fact, many instances occur in the course of this work, and display him resisting expenditure, even in opposition to the wishes of the king. To this part of his conduct, the duke of Newcastle bore testimony, at the time when he was censuring his measures in other respects with the greatest asperity. "As this is a demand of money," he says, in a letter to lord Hardwicke, "we shall find Sir Robert more difficult to comply than upon former occasions ‡."

Public economy.

The improvement of the British trade under his auspices, is generally acknowledged. Dean Tucker calls him, "the best commercial minister this country ever produced §;" and it was justly said of him, that he found the book of rates the worst, and left it the best in Europe.

Commercial improvements.

The eloquence of Sir Robert Walpole was plain, perspicuous, forcible, and manly, not courting, yet not always avoiding metaphorical, ornamental, and classical allusions; though addressed to the reason more than to the feelings, yet on some occasions it was highly animated and impassioned. No debater was ever more happy in quickness of apprehension, sharpness of reply, and in turning the arguments of his assailants against themselves.

Eloquence.

The tone of his voice was pleasing and melodious; his pronunciation distinct and audible, though he never entirely lost the provincial accent. His style, though by no means elegant, often deficient in taste, and sometimes bordering on vulgarity, was highly nervous and animated, persuasive and plausible.

The force of his speeches resulted rather from the general weight, energy,

* See the chapters on excise, sinking fund, and reduction of interest.

† A short history of exchequer bills, which I found among the Orford papers, corrected

by Sir Robert Walpole, will best elucidate this transaction. Correspondence.

‡ August 19, 1741. Hardwicke papers.

§ Tucker against Locke, p. 222.

and

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and arrangement of the whole, than from the splendour of particular parts. He possessed what Horace calls *lucidus ordo*, a luminous arrangement of the most complicated subjects; and a power of communicating his information to others who were ignorant of the topics on which he treated. Even calculation in his mouth was rendered not uninteresting.

Persons distinguished for judgment and abilities, have concurred in paying the tribute of applause to his oratorical talents. Speaker Onslow commends his speech on the peerage bill, as a remarkable effort of natural eloquence and genius *. Lord Cornbury and the duke of Argyle praised, in similar terms, his speech when he relinquished the excise scheme; and Pitt extolled the Philippic against Sir William Wyndham on the secession, as one of the finest speeches he had ever heard †.

A proof of his ready eloquence, recorded by bishop Pearce, is given in this volume ‡, to which I am enabled to add another. During an important debate in the house of commons, he observed that a member of opposition who sat near him, had a written speech concealed in his hat, and obtained a general knowledge of the contents from occasional glimpses. At the moment when the member was about to speak, he rose, and began by observing, were I a member in opposition, I would make use of these arguments. He then recapitulated the speech which he had just cast his eyes over, and adding, I will now reply to these observations, he refuted the arguments in an able and masterly manner §.

It was his custom to note down the heads of the leading expressions in the speeches of opposition, either for his own use, if he himself spoke, or for the use of Sir William Yonge, if absent at the beginning of the debate, who often, through the medium of these memorandums ||, answered those arguments which he had not heard. As to himself, he generally spoke extempore, and without notes, except on points where figures and calculations were necessary. In some instances of great magnitude and delicacy, he put down previously general heads of the arguments which he intended to adopt. Some of these minutes are preserved among the Orford and Walpole Papers, and I have availed myself of them in the course of this work.

Nor was his eloquence confined to the debates in parliament. As chan-

* Speaker Onslow's Remarks, Correspondence, Period IV.

† From the late earl of Hardwicke.

‡ Chapter 7.

§ From lord Orford.

|| Among the Orford and Walpole Papers,

some of these parliamentary memorandums are preserved. They serve to establish one truth, which has been much questioned and controverted; that the debates which were given in the papers and periodical publications, were, upon the whole, not unfaithful. See Preface.

cellor of the exchequer, he was called on to decide in a cause of great difficulty and importance, between Nash and the East India company. The barons being divided, it was his province, as chancellor, to make the decision; and after a long trial, in which six of the most able lawyers pleaded on each side for nineteen hours, he summed up the whole, and in a speech of an hour and a half, gave his opinion and sentence with as great skill, strength, eloquence, and clearness, "as if he had been bred to the law, and had practised no other business all his life*."

He gave to the public several political pamphlets, which, at the time, were much read. His style in these writings was popular, perspicuous, and familiar; not affecting ambitious ornament, or subtilty of argument. He must have written with great ease and correctness, since "The Consideration concerning the Public Funds," one of the most difficult and complicated of his works, was printed from the rough draught in his own hand writing†. I find many instances of his having revised, corrected, and made additions to numerous political pamphlets, particularly to those written by lord Hervey; a proof that he paid more attention to that mode of controversy than is usually imagined‡.

Publications.

He had a ready and tenacious memory. He was remarkable for method and

* Lord Hervey to Horace Walpole, November 18-20, 1735. Correspondence.

† Orford Papers.

‡ It is extremely difficult to give an exact catalogue of his political writings. The list published by his son in the Royal and Noble Authors is both defective and inaccurate, as the late earl candidly acknowledged. I shall here give as accurate a list as it has been in my power to obtain, marking those with a † which I have not been able to procure.

† The Sovereign's Answer to a Gloucestershire Address.

A Letter to a Friend concerning the Public Debts, particularly that of the Navy, 1710.

A State of the Thirty-five Millions mentioned in a Report of the House of Commons, 1710.

The two last articles are comprised in a publication, called The Debts of the Nation Stated and Considered, in four Letters, which is printed in Somers's Tracts. The two other letters, namely, An Estimate of the Debts of her Majesty's Navy, and A Brief Account of the Debts provided for by the South Sea Act,

1712, have likewise been ascribed to Sir Robert Walpole; but as it appears to me, without sufficient foundation.

Four Letters to a Friend in North Britain, upon the publishing the Trial of Dr. Sacheverel, 1710.

† A Pamphlet on the Vote of the House of Commons, with relation to the Allies not furnishing their Quota.

A Short History of the Parliament, 1713. A new edition of this pamphlet, from party motives, was given by Almon in 1763, under the title of "A Short History of that Parliament which committed Sir Robert Walpole to the Tower, expelled him the House of Commons, and approved of the infamous Peace of Utrecht. It was preceded by an advertisement, which speaks of Sir Robert Walpole as a minister who had faithfully served the crown five and twenty years.

Thoughts of a Member of the Lower House, in relation to a Project for restraining and limiting the Power of the Crown in the further Creation of Peers, 1719.

† The South Sea Scheme considered, 1720. Some

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Dispatch of
business.

and dispatch in transacting business. Chesterfield, who did not love him, pays an eulogium to this quality : " The hurry and confusion of the duke of Newcastle, do not proceed from his business, but from his want of method in it. Sir Robert Walpole, who had ten times the business to do, was never seen in a hurry, because he always did it with method *." And lord Hervey characterises him by observing, that " he did every thing with the same ease and tranquillity as if he was doing nothing †."

- In 1723, he united the office of secretary of state to his other employments, and in addition to the internal government of the kingdom, the whole correspondence on foreign affairs devolved on him. During the illness of Sir William Strickland, which rendered him incapable of occupation, Walpole transacted all the business of secretary at war, although it was the middle of a session of parliament.

It is most remarkable, that notwithstanding his extensive correspondence, he seems seldom to have employed a secretary. I have never found one letter which was not wholly written in his own hand ; and I am fully convinced, that all the copies in the Hardwicke Collection, were taken from originals in his own writing.

It is also no less remarkable, that he was in the habit of transcribing whole letters, that he constantly noted the substance of the foreign correspondence, and made numerous extracts from the dispatches of foreign ministers, which would lead a person not acquainted with his multifarious occupations, to conjecture that he studied nothing but foreign affairs; while he was petulantly reproached by those who witnessed the invariable attention which he paid to the internal government of the country, for his ignorance of foreign transactions. The Orford and Walpole Papers abound with numerous extracts and memorandums, which prove his indefatigable exertions.

When the validity of the patent of collector of the customs, which he had secured for the benefit of his family, was disputed, all the briefs for

Some Considerations concerning the Public Revenues, and the Annual Supplies granted by Parliament, occasioned by a late Pamphlet, intituled, An Enquiry into the Conduct of our Domestic Affairs, from the Year 1721 to Christmas 1733. 1735.

The late earl of Orford enumerates among his father's works, a letter from a foreign minister in England, to M. Pettekum, 1710. I have reason to think this pamphlet was not

written by Sir Robert Walpole, as it is a vindication of the Tories. Probably he might have written an answer. On mentioning this circumstance to the earl of Orford, he candidly acknowledged that he might have been mistaken. See Royal and Noble Authors, Article, Earl of Orford.

* Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, Letter 309.

† October 31, 1735. Correspondence.

his

his counsel were drawn up by himself*. Murray, who was employed as counsel, in behalf of Madame la Neve, whose cause Orford warmly supported in the house of lords, said of him, that he never met with any man with a clearer head and more perspicuous method of arranging his ideas†.

Chapter 63.

The great principle on which Walpole conducted himself, seems to have been his favourite motto, *quieta non movere*, not to disturb things at rest. He rightly judged, from the temper of man, ever inclined to speculation, that too frequent innovations would beget a proneness to change, and expose the country to great and certain dangers. An instance of his adherence to this principle, is recorded by one of his contemporaries. Soon after the excise scheme, Sir William Keith, who had been deputy governor of Virginia, came over with a plan of an American tax. Sir Robert Walpole being asked by lord Chesterfield what he thought of Sir William's project, replied, "I have old England set against me, and do you think I will have new England likewise‡." But although he followed in general this true and wise principle, yet he by no means seems to have deserved the censure passed upon him in common with the other ministers: "That if any political system was invariably adhered to during the reign of George the Second, the purport of it appears to have been to leave things as they were, or to check any attempt which might be made to innovation, or even to inquiry§."

Dislike of innovation.

His whole system was a system of gradual improvement: it is only necessary to cast a superficial glance over the regulations in commerce, finance, and jurisprudence, which took place during his administration, to be convinced of this truth.

The fate of Sir Robert Walpole's character as a minister has been extremely singular. While he was in power, he was reviled with unceasing obloquy, and his whole conduct arraigned as a mass of corruption and political depravity. But he himself lived to see the propriety of his preventive measures acknowledged by the public. As time softened the asperities of personal animosity, and as the spirit of party subsided, there was scarcely one of his opponents who did not publicly or privately retract their unqualified censures, and pay a due tribute to the wisdom of the general principles which guided his administration. Impartial posterity has done still greater justice to the memory of a statesman, who, whatever might have been his public or private defects, maintained his country in tranquillity for a longer period, than had been experienced since the reign of James the First.

* Enough.

† From the earl of Orford.

‡ From the late earl of Hardwicke, com-

municated by lord Chesterfield. Hardwicke Papers.

§ Sinclair, vol. 2. p. 24.

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Character by
Burke.

I shall close this sketch of Walpole's public character in the words of a celebrated writer, who alone seems to have fairly appreciated his merits and scanned his defects.

"He was an honourable man, and a sound Whig. He was not, as the Jacobites and discontented Whigs of his own time have represented him, and as ill informed people still represent him, a prodigal and corrupt minister. They charged him, in their libels and seditious conversations, as having first reduced corruption to a system. Such was their cant. But he was far from governing by corruption. He governed by party attachments. The charge of systematic corruption is less applicable to him, perhaps, than to any minister who ever served the crown for so great a length of time. He gained over very few from the opposition. Without being a genius of the first class, he was an intelligent, prudent, and safe minister. He loved peace; and he helped to communicate the same disposition to nations at least as warlike and restless as that in which he had the chief direction of affairs. Though he served a master who was fond of martial fame, he kept all the establishments very low. The land tax continued at two shillings in the pound for the greater part of his administration. The other impositions were moderate. The profound repose, the equal liberty, the firm protection of just laws, during the long period of his power, were the principal causes of that prosperity which took such rapid strides towards perfection; and which furnished to this nation, ability to acquire the military glory which it has since obtained, as well as to bear the burthens, the cause and consequence of that warlike reputation. With many virtues, public and private, he had his faults; but his faults were superficial. A careless, coarse, and over familiar style of discourse, without sufficient regard to persons or occasions, and an almost total want of political decorum, were the errors by which he was most hurt in the public opinion, and those through which his enemies obtained the greatest advantage over him. But justice must be done. The prudence, steadiness, and vigilance of that man, joined to the greatest possible lenity in his character and his politics, preserved the crown to this royal family; and with it, their laws and liberties to this country *."

* Burke's Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, p. 63.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-FOURTH.

Private Character of Sir Robert Walpole.—Person.—Disposition.—Manners.—Social Qualities.—Neglect of Men of Letters.—Conduct in Parliament.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE was tall and well proportioned, and in his youth and opening manhood so comely, that at the time of his marriage he and his wife were called the *handsome couple*, and among the knights who walked in procession at the installation of the garter, in 1725, he was, next to the duke of Grafton and lord Townshend, most distinguished for his appearance. As he advanced in years he became extremely corpulent and unwieldy. His countenance does not seem to have been remarkable for strong traits. The features were regular; when he spoke, and particularly when he smiled, his physiognomy was pleasing, benign, and enlightened: his eye was full of spirit and fire, and his brow prominent and manly. Person.

His style of dress was usually plain and simple; a circumstance which was not overlooked by the Craftsman, who thus holds him up to ridicule: "There entered a man dressed in a *plain habit*, with a purse of gold in his hand. He threw himself forward into the room in a bluff ruffianly manner, a smile, or rather a sneer upon his countenance *." His address was so frank and open, his conversation so pleasing, and his manner so fascinating, that those who lived with him in habits of intimacy adored him, those who saw him occasionally loved him, and even his most bitter opponents could not hate him. One of these did not hesitate to say of him, "Never was a man in private life more beloved: And his enemies allow no man did ever in private life deserve it more. He was humane and grateful, and a generous friend to all who he did not think would abuse that friendship. This character naturally procured that attachment to his person, which has been falsely attributed solely to a corrupt influence and to private interest; but this shewed itself at a time when these principles were very faint in their operation, and when his ruin seemed inevitable †." Dress.
Address.

* N^o. 16.

† Faction Detected, p. 62.

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Temper.

Good temper and equanimity were his leading characteristics, and the placability imprinted on his countenance was not belied by his conduct. Of this disposition, his generous rival, Pulteney, thought so highly, that in a conversation with Johnson, he said, "Sir Robert was of a temper so calm and equal, and so hard to be provoked, that he was very sure he never felt the bitterest invectives against him for half an hour*."

Affability.

His deportment was manly and decisive, yet affable and condescending; he was easy of access; his manner of bestowing a favour heightened the obligation; and his manner of declining was so gracious that few persons went out of his company discontented.

Gaiety.

Among those parts of his convivial character which have attracted attention, his laugh is noticed for singular gaiety and heartiness. His son familiarly observed to me, "It would have done you good to hear him laugh." Sir Charles Hanbury Williams says of him that he "*laugh'd the heart's laugh.*" Nicholas Hardinge elegantly noticed its peculiarity, "*proprioque vincit seria risu.*"

Conversation.

His conversation was sprightly, animated, and facetious, yet occasionally coarse and vulgar, and too often licentious to an unpardonable degree.

Manners.

In company with women he assumed an air of gallantry, which even in his younger days was ill-suited to his manner and character, but in his latter years was totally incompatible with his age and figure. He affected in his conversation with the sex a trifling levity; but his gaiety was rough and boisterous, his wit too often coarse and licentious.

If we may believe Lord Chesterfield, who knew him well, but whose pen was dipped in gall when he drew his character, "His prevailing weakness was to be thought to have a polite and happy turn to gallantry, of which he had undoubtedly less than any man living; it was his favourite and frequent subject of conversation; which proved, to those who had any penetration, that it was his prevailing weakness, and they applied to it with success†." Pulteney also said of him, "A writer who would tell him of his success in his amours, would gain his confidence in a higher degree than one who commended the conduct of his administration‡." To this foible

* Hawkins's Life of Johnson, p. 314.

† Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, l. 97.

‡ A proper Reply to a late scurrilous Libel, p. 8.

also a poetaster, after speaking of him under the name of Sir Robert Brads, Chapter 64.
alludes,—

“Nay, to divert the sneering town,
“Is next a general lover grown,
“Affects to talk of his amours,
“And boasts of having ruin’d scores,
“While all who hear him bite the lip,
“And scarce with pain their laughter keep *.”

This foible he shared in common with many able men, and particularly with cardinal Richelieu, who piqued himself more on being a man of gallantry than on being a great minister. It is some consolation for persons of inferior abilities, that men of superior talents are not exempt from the infirmities of human nature, and it is no uncommon circumstance, to prefer flattery on those points in which we wish to excel, to just praise for those in which we are known to excel.

He is justly blamed for a want of political decorum, and for deriding public spirit, to which Pope alludes,— Unreserved-
ness.

“Would he oblige me! let me only find,
“He does not think me, what he thinks mankind.”

Although it is not possible to justify him, yet this part of his conduct has been greatly exaggerated. The political axiom generally attributed to him, that *all men have their price*, and which has been so often repeated in verse and prose, was perverted by leaving out the word *those*. Flowery oratory he despised; he ascribed to the interested views of themselves or their relatives, the declarations of pretended patriots, of whom he said, “*All those men have their price*,” and in the event, many of them justified his observation†. No man was more ready to honour and do justice to sincerity and consistency. He always mentioned his friend the duke of Devonshire in terms of the highest affection and respect, and even applauded the uniform conduct of one of his constant opponents. “I will not say,” he observed, “who is corrupt, but I will say who is not, and that is Shippen.”

His own conduct sufficiently belied the axiom erroneously imputed to him. Consistency.

* Sir Robert Brads. A Poem.

† From lord Orford and the late lord John Cavendish.

Period VIII. him. He was consistent and uniform, never deviating in one single in-
 1742 to 1745. stance from his attachment to the protestant succession. He was neither
 awed by menaces or swayed by corruption; he held one line of conduct with
 unabating perseverance, and terminated his political career with the same sen-
 timents of loyalty which distinguished his outset.

Profusion.

He was naturally liberal, and even prodigal. His buildings at Houghton
 were more magnificent than suited his circumstances, and drew on him
 great obloquy. He felt the impropriety of this expenditure, and on
 seeing his brother's house at Wolterton, expressed his wishes that he had
 contented himself with a similar structure*. The following anecdote
 also shews that he regretted his profusion: Sitting by Sir John Hynde
 Cotton, during the reign of queen Anne, and in allusion to a sumptu-
 nous house which was then building by Harley; he observed, that to con-
 struct a great house was a high act of imprudence in any minister. After-
 wards, when he had pulled down the family mansion at Houghton, and
 raised a magnificent edifice, being reminded of that observation by Sir
 John Hynde Cotton, he readily acknowledged its justness and truth,
 but added, "Your recollection is too late, I wish you had reminded
 me of it before I began building, it might then have been of service to
 me †."

Hospitality.

His style of living was consonant to the magnificence of his mansion. He
 had usually two annual meetings at Houghton, the one in the spring, to
 which were invited only the most select friends and the leading members of the
 cabinet, continued about three weeks. The second was in autumn, towards
 the commencement of the shooting season. It continued six weeks or two
 months, and was called the congress. At this time Houghton was filled with
 company from all parts. He kept a public table, to which all gentlemen
 in the county found a ready admission.

The expences of these meetings have been computed at £. 3,000. No-
 thing could be more ill-judged than the enormous profusion, except the
 company for which it was made. The mixed multitude consisted of his
 friends in both houses, and of their friends. The noise and uproar, the
 waste and confusion were prodigious. The best friends of Sir Robert Wal-
 pole in vain remonstrated against this scene of riot and misrule. As the mi-
 nister himself was fond of mirth and jollity, the conviviality of their meet-
 ings was too frequently carried to excess, and lord Townshend, whose
 dignity of deportment and decorum of character revolted against these

* From lord Walpole.

† From the late Sir John Hynde Cotton.

scenes, which he called the Bacchanalian orgies of Houghton, not unfrequently quitted Rainham during their continuance. But notwithstanding these censures, and the impropriety of such conduct, it undoubtedly gained and preserved to the minister numerous adherents, who applauded a mode of living so analogous to the spirit of ancient hospitality.

This profusion would have been highly disgraceful had it been attended with a rapacious disposition. On the contrary, he gave many instances of carelessness and disregard of his private fortune. He expended £. 14,000 in building a new lodge in Richmond park *, and when the king, on the death of Bothmar, in 1738, offered him the house in Downing-street, he refused it as his own property, but accepted it as an appendage to the office of chancellor of the exchequer †.

Disinterestedness.

He was, from his early youth, fond of the diversions of the field, and retained this taste till prevented by the infirmities of age. He was accustomed to hunt in Richmond park with a pack of beagles. On receiving a packet of letters he usually opened that from his game-keeper first; and he was fond of sitting for his picture in his sporting dress. He was, like chancellor Oxenfiern, a sound sleeper, and used to say, "that he put off his cares with his cloaths."

Love of field sports.

His social qualities were generally acknowledged. He was animated and lively in conversation, and in the moment of festivity realised the fine eulogium which Pope has given of him,—

Social qualities.

"Seen him, I have, but in his happier hour
 "Of social pleasure, ill-exchang'd for power;
 "Seen him, uncumber'd with the venal tribe,
 "Smile without art, and win without a bribe."

Epilogue to the Satires.

To the virtues of Sir Robert Walpole I feel regret in not being able to add that he was the patron of letters and the friend of science. But he unquestionably does not deserve that honourable appellation, and in this instance his rank in the Temple of Fame is far inferior to that of Halifax, Oxford, and Bolingbroke. It is a matter of wonder that a minister who had received a learned education, and was no indifferent scholar, should have paid such little attention to the muses. Nor can it be denied, that this

Neglect of men of letters.

* From lord Orford.

† From lord Walpole.

neglect

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neglect of men of letters, was highly disadvantageous to his administration, and exposed him to great obloquy. The persons employed in justifying his measures, and repelling the attacks of the opposition, were by no means equal to the task of combating Pulteney, Bolingbroke and Chesterfield, those Goliaths of opposition; and the political pamphlets written in his defence, are far inferior in humour, argument, and style, to the publications of his adversaries.

Pope has ably satirized the herd of political writers employed by the minister, first in the epilogue to the Satires, and in the Dunciad,—

“ Next plung’d a feeble, but a desperate pack,
 “ With each a sickly brother at his back :
 “ Sons of a day ! just buoyant on the flood,
 “ These number’d with the puppies in the mud,
 “ Ask ye their names ? I could as soon disclose,
 “ The names of these blind puppies as of those.
 “ Fast by, like Niobe, (her children gone)
 “ Sits mother Osborne, stupify’d to stone !
 “ And monumental brass this record bears,
 “ These are,—— ah, no, these were the gazetteers !”

But that he did not wholly neglect literary merit, appears from the grateful strains of the author of the Night Thoughts, for whom he procured a pension from George the First, and which was increased at his suggestion by George the Second, to £. 200 a year, at that time no inconsiderable reward.

At this the muse shall kindle, and aspire :
 My breast, O Walpole, glows with grateful fire,
 The streams of royal bounty, turn’d by thee,
 Refresh the dry remains of poetry.
 My fortune shews, when arts are Walpole’s care,
 What slender worth forbids us to despair :
 Be this thy partial smile from censure free ;
 ’Twas meant for merit, though it fell on me *.

The truth is, Sir Robert Walpole did not delight in letters, and always considered poets as not men of business. He was often heard to say, that

* Young’s Instalment, addressed to Sir Robert Walpole.

they

they were fitter for speculation than for action, that they trusted to theory, rather than to experience, and were guided by principles inadmissible in practical life. His opinion was confirmed by the experience of his own time. Prior made but an indifferent negotiator; his friend Steele was wholly incapable of application, and Addison a miserable secretary of state. He was so fully impressed with these notions, that when he made Congreve commissioner of the customs, he said, "You will find he has no head for business."

Low persons were employed by government, and profusely paid, some of whom not unfrequently propagated in private conversation, and even in public clubs, disadvantageous reports of the minister, and declared that high rewards induced them to write against their real sentiments. Several known disseminators of infidelity, were engaged to defend his measures. Many warm remonstrances were frequently made by the minister's friends against employing such low mercenaries, but usually disregarded. Some of these insignificant writers had frequent access to him. Their delusive and encouraging accounts of persons and things, were too often more credited, than the sincere and free intimations of those who were more capable of giving accurate information. But this seems an error too common in ministers: they prefer favourable accounts to dismal truth, and readily believe what they wish to be true.

It is a natural curiosity to inquire into the behaviour and occupations of a minister retired from business, and divested of that power which he had long enjoyed. Those who admired his talents, while he swayed senates and governed kingdoms, contemplate him, "in their mind's eye," enjoying his retreat with dignity, and passing his leisure hours with calmness and complacency. Yet nothing in general is more unsatisfactory than such an inquiry, or more illusive than such a preconceived opinion. The well-known saying, that "no man is a hero to his valet de chambre," may be applied with strict justice to this case. Sir Robert Walpole experienced the truth of the observation, that a fallen minister is like a professed beauty, who has lost her charms, and to whom the recollection of past conquests, but poorly compensates for present neglect.

Conduct in
retirement.

Though he had not forgotten his classical attainments, he had little taste for literary occupations. He once expressed his regret on this subject to Fox, who was reading in the library at Houghton. "I wish," he said, "I took as much delight in reading as you do, it would be the means of alleviating many tedious hours in my present retirement; but to my misfortune I derive

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no pleasure from such pursuits."—On another occasion, he said to his son Horace, who, with a view to amuse him, was preparing to read some historical performance, "O! do not read history, for that I know must be false *."

His principal amusement consisted in planting, observing the growth of his former plantations, and in seeing his son Horace arrange the fine collection of pictures at Houghton. He had a good taste for painting, and his observations on the style of the respective masters were usually judicious.

A letter which he wrote from Houghton to general Churchill, in 1743, was much admired, as indicating a love of retirement, and contempt of past grandeur. Yet this letter strikes me in a contrary light; it proves that he was weary of that repose which he affected to praise; and that he did not, as much as he professed, taste the charms of the inanimate world. The trite observation, that the beeches do not deceive, proves either that he regretted the times that were past, or that with all his penetration, he had not, when in power, made a just estimate of the deceitfulness and treachery of dependents and courtiers †. Houghton had been either the temporary place of retirement from public business, or the scene of friendly intercourse and convivial jollity, and neglect rendered it comparatively a solitude. He saw and felt this desertion with greater sensibility than became his good sense; but in the

* From lord Orford.

† Earl of Orford to general Churchill,—
Houghton, June 24th 1743.

Dear Charles,

This place affords no news, no subject of entertainment, or amusement, for fine men of wit and pleasure about town, understand not the language, and taste not the pleasure of the inanimate world. My flatterers here are all mutes. The oaks, the beeches, the chefnuts, seem to contend which best shall please the lord of the manor. They cannot deceive, they will not lie. I in sincerity admire them, and have as many beauties about me as fill up all my hours of dangle, and no disgrace attends me from 67 years of age. Within doors we come a little nearer to real life, and admire, upon the almost speaking canvass, all the airs and graces which the proudest ladies can boast. With these I am satisfied, as they gratify me with all I wish, and all I want, and expect nothing in return, which I cannot give.

If these, dear Charles, are any temptations, I heartily invite you to come and partake of them. Shifting the scene has sometimes its recommendation, and from country fare, you may possibly return with a better appetite to the more delicate entertainments of a court life.

Since I wrote the above, we have been surprised with the good news * from abroad. Too much cannot be said of it. It is truly matter of infinite joy, because of infinite consequence.

I am, dear Charles,

Your's most affectionately, Orford.

This letter is here printed from a copy kindly communicated by lord Calthorpe, who found it among his family papers. His lordship's grandfather, Sir Henry Gough, baronet, was neighbour to Sir Robert Walpole, at Chelsea, and was in habits of intimacy with him. It is printed in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1743, with many errors, which are rectified in this copy. An elegant imitation of this letter in Latin verse is given in the correspondence.

† The battle of Dettingen.

calm

calm and solitude of total retirement, such disagreeable reflections occur often and sink deep. The season of natural gaiety was irrecoverably past, he laboured under a painful distemper; the ill-assorted marriage of his eldest son, and embarrassed situation of his own affairs preyed on his mind, and increased his dejection.

This state of mind was natural. Every circumstance must have appeared uninteresting to a man, who from the twenty-third year of his age, had been uniformly engaged in scenes of political exertion, who, from the commencement of his parliamentary career, had passed a life of unremitting activity, and made a conspicuous figure in the senate, and in the cabinet.

To him who had directed the helm of government in England, and whose decisions affected the interests of Europe in general, all speculative opinions must have appeared dull. To him who had drawn all his knowledge and experience from practice, all theory must have appeared trifling or erroneous. He who had fathomed the secrets of all the cabinets of Europe, must have considered history as a tissue of fables, and have smiled at the folly of those writers, who affected to penetrate into state affairs, and account for all the motives of action. He who had long been the dispenser of honours and wealth, must have perceived a wide difference between the cold expressions of duty and friendship, and the warm effusions of that homage which self-interest and hope inspire in those who court or expect favours. He must have been divested of human passions, had he not experienced some mortification in finding, that he had been indebted to his situation for much of that obsequious regard which he had fondly thought was paid to his personal qualities.

I shall conclude this sketch of his private character, with a portrait, drawn from the life, by his friend Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, in an epistle to Henry Fox.

But ORFORD's self, I've seen, whilst I have read,
Laugh the heart's laugh, and nod the approving head.
Pardon, great shade, if duteous on thy hearse,
I hang my grateful tributary verse.
If I who follow'd thro' thy various day,
Thy glorious zenith, and thy bright decay;
Now strew thy tomb with flowers, and o'er thy urn,
With England, Liberty, and Envy, mourn.
His soul was great, and dar'd not but do well;
His noble pride still urg'd him to excel,

Above

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Above the thirst of gold—if in his heart
 Ambition govern'd, av'rice had no part.
 A genius to explore untrodden ways,
 Where prudence fees no track, nor ever strays;
 Which books and schools in vain attempt to teach,
 And which laborious art can never reach.
 Falshood and flattery, and the tricks of court,
 He left to statesmen of a meaner sort:
 Their cloaks and smiles were offer'd him in vain:
 His acts were justice, which he dar'd maintain,
 His words were truth, that held them in disdain.
 Open to friends, but e'en to foes sincere,
 Alike remote from jealousy and fear;
 Tho' Envy's howl, tho' Faction's hiss he heard,
 Tho' senates frown'd; tho' death itself appeared;
 Camly he view'd them; conscious that his ends
 Were right, and truth and innocence his friends.
 Thus was he form'd to govern, and to please;
 Familiar greatness, dignity with ease,
 Compos'd his frame, admir'd in every state,
 In private amiable, in public great;
 Gentle in power, but daring in disgrace;
 His love was liberty, his wish was peace.
 Such was the man that smil'd upon my lays;
 And what can heighten thought or genius raise,
 Like praise from him whom all mankind must praise?
 Whose knowledge, courage, temper, all surpris'd,
 Whom many lov'd, few hated, none despis'd.

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Additional ERRATA:

Page 755. l. 3. for *parliament*, read *retirement*.
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